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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

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JOANNES GERARD, S.J.,

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FOR

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

*(ARRANGED WITH A VIEW TO THE OXFORD AND
CAMBRIDGE LOCAL EXAMINATIONS)*

EDITED BY THE

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ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

(CHAPTERS I.-XII.)

WITH SUPPLEMENT'CONTAINING CHAPTERS XIII.-XVI.

BY THE

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SIXTEENTH THOUSAND

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INTRODUCTION.

The Authorship. The author of the Acts does not give his name, in this resembling the authors of the Gospels. We can gather, however, from the text (1) that he was likewise the author of the Third Gospel. This appears unmistakably in the prefaces to the two works, which resemble one another so closely and are, at the same time, quite unlike anything found elsewhere among the books of the New Testament; it appears also in the distinct assertion of the preface to Acts that the writer had likewise composed a "former treatise," the subject matter of which, "all things which Jesus began to do and to teach until the day on which he was taken up," corresponds exactly with that of the Third Gospel; it appears, thirdly, in the identity of style between the Acts and that Gospel. (2) We gather from the text of Acts that the author was a disciple and companion of St. Paul. For the unity of style and plan which pervades the Book of Acts throughout shows that the whole of it was written by the same person, and the use of the first person plural in xvi. 10-xvii. 1, and again in xx. 6-xxviii. 31, shows that this person was with St. Paul at Troas and Philippi on his Second Missionary Journey, and, though remaining behind when St. Paul left Philippi, rejoined him when he returned to that town again during his Third Journey, and then became his constant companion, at least till some time after St. Paul's first arrival in Rome.

That this companion of St. Paul was St. Luke is a fact which was evidently well known among the early Christians. We do not indeed find the subject men-

tioned by the Fathers of the generation immediately succeeding the Apostles, such as St. Clement of Rome, St. Ignatius, and St. Polycarp, or even St. Justin Martyr, although each of these writers shows his acquaintance with Acts by the quotations he makes from it. But towards the end of the second century, when the patristic literature becomes more abundant, we find St. Luke's authorship treated as undisputed. See the Muratorian Fragment, Tertullian (*De Jejuniis*, cx.), Irenæus (*Contra Hæreses*, iii. 15). These references prove that St. Luke was the author, and this being established, we can take into account the few things stated about St. Luke in St. Paul's Epistles (Coloss. iv. 14; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11, and possibly 2 Cor. viii. 18). Of these references in the Epistles, that of Coloss. iv. 14 is specially interesting as telling us that he was a physician. To which Eusebius adds from tradition that he was a physician at Antioch, and some commentators notice, as agreeing with this account of his calling, that in the Third Gospel and Acts diseases are described with something of professional accuracy.

The trustworthiness of Acts as a record of events. Two things we require to know about our historian before we can accept his record as true. We must know that he was one who would speak the truth as far as he knew it, and we must know that he had the means of accurately learning the facts. That St. Luke had this first qualification is made manifest to us not only by the trust reposed in him by the Church, but also by the character of his writings. They bear the stamp of truthfulness throughout. That he was a competent witness, his truthfulness presupposed, we can likewise gather from the text of the Acts, since, as has been explained, he was St. Paul's companion for a long time. For this means that in regard to much of what he writes he was an eye-witness, and that as regards the rest, he

could have gathered authentic information from St. Paul, from Philip the Evangelist (cp. xxi. 8 with xxiv. 27), and from many others ; as, for instance, St. James the Less, and possibly St. Peter. A comparison, too, of Coloss. iv. 14 with *ibid.* 27 shows that he must have known St. Mark. We can also strengthen this proof of St. Luke's trustworthiness as a historian by two others. Of these, one is from the number of coincidences, as regards their statements about facts, between Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul. When we wish to know if two people are speaking the truth, we observe (1) whether their stories agree, (2) whether the agreement is of such a kind that it cannot be attributed to an intentional design on the part of one or both of the narrators. Coincidences in which this second condition is fulfilled are called *undesigned coincidences*, and there are many such which disclose themselves when we compare Acts with the Epistles of St. Paul. Compare, by way of example, Acts xiii. 45-52 and xvi. 1-3 with 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11, 15, noticing how each book represents Timothy as the child of a pagan father and a Jewish mother, and as having been an eye-witness of St. Paul's persecutions at Antioch (of Pisidia), Iconium, and Lystra, but not of any at Derbe ; and yet how these facts are brought out in the most perfectly natural way, Timothy, for instance, not being mentioned in Acts xiii., xiv., where the persecutions are described, and that he was then present being insinuated only, inasmuch as in xvi. 1 he appears as already a disciple. This argument has been worked out by Paley in his *Horæ Paulinæ*, a book well worth reading. The other confirmatory proof of the author's trustworthiness is from the character of his descriptions, which are unmistakably those of an eye-witness at times when, according to his own account, he was with St. Paul. This point is illustrated by xx. 7-12, 17-38 xxi. 26-40, xxvii.

Plan and date of composition. There is little to say about the plan beyond what is said in Appendix II.; but we may distinguish as corresponding with the terms of i. 8 between the preaching in Judea (i.-vii), the preaching in Samaria and the neighbouring parts (viii.-xii.), and the preaching throughout the world (xiii. to end). That so little is recorded of other Apostles save SS. Peter and Paul, and some few facts about St. John and St. James the Less, is quite consistent with the traditional title, which is *Acts of Apostles*, not *The Acts of the Apostles*. The composition of the book is reasonably referred to Rome, at the time of St. Paul's first captivity there; for the record of St. Paul's life ends here, and one does not see why it should not have been continued further, unless we suppose that it was written at that time. For more on these introductory questions, see Introduction to Acts, Part II., and the Appendices to this volume.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

CHAPTER I.

JESUS ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN—**vv. 1-11.**

- 1. THE former treatise** giving commands **by** the I made, O Theophilus, of Holy Ghost to the apostles all things which Jesus began whom he had chosen, he to do and to teach, was taken up:
2. Until the day on which, **3. To whom also he**
-

- 1. The former treatise** (πρώτον). Lit., “first,” but the first of two is the “former.”

Theophilus. An unknown person. (See Preface to Part II.) *Began to do* is a characteristic phrase with the evangelists (Matt. xii. 1; Mark iv. 1, vi. 2; Luke xii. 1, xxiii. 2). They mean by it to include all that was done—the continuation as well as the beginning, but they fix on the beginning as the starting point.

Notice the μέν after *πρώτον*. St. Luke had intended to go on thus: “But this second treatise I am making about what happened after the Ascension.” He is led away, however, by the desire to add further particulars about the forty days after the Resurrection, and so forgets to complete the construction.

- 2. Giving commands by the Holy Ghost.** “By the Holy Ghost,” from its position in the Greek text, may go either with “giving commands”—i.e., “having given commands” (ἐντειλάμενος)—or with “had chosen.” The first seems best, as “having given commands” would be weak without an adverbial phrase to support it. Our Lord, in His human nature and its actions, is constantly described as moved by the Holy Spirit. (Cp. Luke iii. 22, iv. 1, 14, 18; Matt. xii. 18.) This mention of the Spirit’s action here is in view of what follows. As their original commission was through the Spirit, so the Spirit should come down on them presently, and help them to accomplish it.

- 3. To whom He showed Himself alive by many proofs.** We have ten recorded instances of His appearances to the

showed himself alive, after his passion, by many proofs; for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God :

4. And eating with them,¹ he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith he) by my mouth.

ANGLICAN AUTHORIZED VERSION.

¹ Being assembled together with them.

{Apostles and disciples :—(1) To Mary Magdalene (Mark xvi. 9). (2) To the other women (Matt. xxviii. 9). (3) To St. Peter (Luke xxiv. 34). (4) To the two disciples when going to Emmaus (*ibid.* 15). (5) To the collected disciples (St. Thomas being absent) on Easter evening (Luke xxiv. 36 ; John xx. 19). (6) To all the disciples on Low Sunday evening (John *ibid.* 26). (7) To five hundred disciples (1 Cor. xv. 6). (8) To James (*ibid.* 7). (9) To the disciples on the border of the lake (John xxi. ; 1 Cor. xv. 7). (10) To St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 8 ; Acts ix. 4. xxii. 6-10, xxvi. 12-18).

Proofs. That is, "convincing proofs" (τεκμηρίους). No proofs could be more convincing than conversations with one whom they had known before, and these are what the Apostles had, as we see from the accounts given.

For forty days appearing to them. This is the only passage in Holy Writ where the length of time between our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension is mentioned. As it is St. Luke who thus gives the time, we have the clearest proof that in his Gospel he does not ascribe the Ascension and Resurrection to the same day. See Comment. *in loc.*

4. **Eating with them.** Συναλιζόμενος is a rare word in Greek literature, and its meaning is not certainly known. The Vulgate translates *convescens* (i.e. "eating with them,"), deriving the word from *als*, salt, and so does the Peschito, or ancient Syriac translation ; so, too, does St. John Chrysostom in his commentary. Modern authorities prefer the derivation from *άλῆς*, *packed together*, and translate "being joined" (to them), that is, "coming to them." But compare Luke xxiv. 43 ; Acts x. 41.

The promise of the Father—i.e., the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit had been repeatedly promised by God the Father through the mouth of His prophets, notably of Jeremiah xxxi. 33 ; Ezech. xxxvi. 26 ; Joel ii. 28.

Which you have heard by My mouth. He Himself had

5. For John indeed baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6. They, therefore, who were come together, asked him, saying: Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7. But he said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father hath put in his own power:

8. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all

promised to send the Holy Ghost in Matt. x. 20; Luke xxi. 15; John xiv. 26, xv. 26. Luke xxiv. 49 probably refers to the same occasion as that now recorded.

5. **You shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.** This does not mean that the Apostles were about to receive the sacrament of baptism at Pentecost, as it is generally agreed that they had already received baptism either at the hands of Christ or His disciples (see John iii. 26). It refers to the abundance of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Ghost that were about to be bestowed upon them (see below ii. 4). For as in baptism the neophyte sinks beneath the waters, so the disciples would be completely absorbed and flooded with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

6. **Wilt Thou restore the kingdom to Israel?** The disciples were still hoping for a restoration of the old Jewish kingdom on a grander scale of temporal power and glory. Hence they thought our Lord meant this by the "promise of the Father."

7. **It is not for you to know the times or moments** (*χρόνους ἢ καιρούς*). The first word denotes the actual time, the second the suitable occasion. It was not for the disciples to know at what precise date or under what circumstances the restoration of Israel would take place. (Cp. Luke xxi. 7.)

Which the Father has put in His own power. That is, "hath appointed by His own authority."

8. **Witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.** That is, witnesses to His life, death, and resurrection; to His works and His teaching, and to the promises made through Him. (Cp. Luke xxiv. 44-48; Acts v. 32, x. 39-42.) When the disciples were first sent to preach (Matt. x. 5), they were forbidden to go to the Samaritans or Gentiles. This was because the Gospel was to be first offered to the chosen race. Now, however, it is to be preached to the

4 THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—I. 9-12.

Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.

9. And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10. And whilst they were beholding him going up to

heaven, behold, two men stood by them in white garments,

11. Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, so shall he come as you have seen him going into heaven.

The Apostles prepare to receive the Holy Ghost—vv. 12-14.

12. Then they returned to Jerusalem, from the mount that is called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, within a sabbath day's journey.

whole world. This verse contains the whole plan of the history of the Acts, which gives (1) the witness in Jerusalem, i.-vii.; (2) the witness in Samaria, viii.-xii.; (3) the witness to the uttermost parts, xiii.-xxviii.

9. **He was raised up.** The Ascension of our Lord is recorded by SS. Mark and Luke only. Possibly it was felt to be so necessary a consequence of the Resurrection, and to be such an undisputed fact, that it was omitted from the other records. The Resurrection was the central truth of Christ's life to which the Apostles were to bear witness.
11. **Ye men of Galilee.** All the Apostles except Judas Iscariot were from Galilee. "The two men" were, of course, two Angels.

Why stand you looking up to heaven? The Apostles doubtless were gazing into the heavens, rooted to the spot with wonder and joy. The question of the Angels was to remind them that there was a work for them to do on earth, that the earth might be made ready for their Lord's return.

So shall He come as you have seen Him going into heaven. This was said partly to console the disciples, partly to impress upon them once more the great fact that our Lord will come again to judge all men. As "a cloud (probably a bright cloud) received him out of their sight," so will "he come in a cloud with great power and majesty" (Luke xxi. 27).

12. **Then they returned to Jerusalem, from Mount Olivet.** It is not easy to learn from the inspired writer the exact site of the Ascension. In the Gospel we read: "He led

13. And when they had entered in, they went up into an upper room, where

there remained Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartho-

them out *as far as to Bethania*, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them: and it came to pass whilst he blessed them, that he departed from them, and was carried up to heaven" (Luke xxiv. 50, 51). Thence it is natural to infer that our Lord ascended from Bethania. But here they are said to have returned from Olivet, as though our Lord had been taken from them there, and yet Olivet is said to be "a sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem" (*i.e.*, about five-eighths of a mile), whilst Bethania was fifteen stadia (John xi. 18), or nearly two miles from the city. Tradition again fixes the site at the highest point of the mountain where St. Helena built the Church of the Ascension, and this site agrees as regards distance with our present verse. We may perhaps reconcile the apparent inconsistency by supposing that our Lord went by the lower circuitous road to Bethany, the place He knew so well, and thence ascended the mountain in the direction of a return to Jerusalem. But compare note to Mark xi. 1.

From the mount that is called Olivet. This is the name given to the mountain rising to the east of Jerusalem. It is separated from the city by the valley through which the brook Cedron runs. In the time of our Lord it was thickly covered with groves of olive and fig trees.

13. **They went up into an upper room.** Better, "*the upper room*" (τὸ ὑπερώϊον), where they were used to meet for prayer or any important business. From the words of the Gospel, "they were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke xxiv. 52), some have inferred that this "upper room" was in the temple, but the term seems rather to refer to the upper room where they had been in the habit of meeting, probably the cenacle where our Lord ate the Paschal Supper.

This list of the Apostles should be compared with the lists in Matt. x. 2-4; Mark iii. 16-19; Luke vi. 14-16. The names fall into three groups of four (out of the last of which Judas has now fallen). Peter, Philip, and James the son of Alphaeus are always at the head of the groups. "Jude of James," means Jude brother of James (the Less). He is so called to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot—*i.e.*, the "Man of Kerioth." He was also the brother of Simon Zelotes, or Simon the Zealot. The Zealots were a party noted for their zeal for the obser-

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lomew and Matthew, James vering with one mind in
 of Alpheus, and Simon prayer with the women, and
 Zelotes, and Jude of James. Mary the mother of Jesus,
 14. All these were perse- and his brethren.

Matthias is chosen to fill the place of Judas—vv. 15-26.

15. In those days Peter, Scripture must be fulfilled,
 rising up in the midst of the which the Holy Ghost fore-
 brethren, said: (now the told by the mouth of David,
 number of persons together concerning Judas, who was
 was about a hundred and the leader of them that ap-
 twenty:) prehended Jesus:

16. Men, brethren, the 17. Who was numbered

vance of the law. Simon had presumably belonged to them before he became an Apostle.

14. All these were persevering in prayer. According to the passage just quoted, "they were continually in the temple." It was customary in the temple to offer a sacrifice of praise to God seven times in the day. It was at these services that the disciples were distinguished for their fervent attendance.

With the women. It was usual among the Jews for religious women to attend and wait upon the teachers of the law. The "women" here referred to were doubtless Mary Magdalene, Martha, Salome, Joanna, Susanna, and others, "who ministered to our Lord of their substance" (Luke viii. 2, 3).

With Mary the mother of Jesus. She is mentioned apart from the rest on account of her dignity as The Mother.

And His brethren. These seem to be distinguished from the eleven, and yet James, Simon, and Jude are called His brethren in Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3. (Cp. Gal. i. 19.) Probably some other kinsmen of our Lord are meant—for "brethren" here means "kinsmen." See note to Mark, chap. vi.

15. Peter, rising. "How fervent he is," says Chrysostom; "knowing that the flock was committed to him by Christ, he is always the leader of the band, always the first to speak!" It should be noticed how throughout the first part of Acts, whenever Peter appears, he appears quite as the texts (Matt. xvi. 16; Luke xxii. 31, 32; John xxi. 15-17) would lead us to expect.

16. The Scripture must be fulfilled. He is referring to the texts quoted in verses 19, 20.

17. Obtained part of this ministry. Better, "Obtained the lot

with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18. And he indeed hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity; and, being hanged, burst asunder in the midst; and all his bowels gushed out.

19. And it became known

to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so that the same field is called in their tongue, Haceldama,¹ that is, The field of blood.

20. For it is written in the book of Psalms: Let their habitation become desolate, and let there be none to

A. V.

¹ Aceldama.

of this ministry." κλήρος means (1) something used to cast lots with; (2) an allotted portion; (3) the "clergy" as the portion of God's people set apart from the rest.

18. He possessed a field of the reward of iniquity. Better, "acquired." St. Matthew says (xxvii. 7) that the priests bought the field; but as it was bought with the "reward of iniquity"—the thirty pieces of silver given to Judas—it could in a sense be regarded as his purchase.

Being hanged. Vulgate *suspensus*, but the Greek has *πρηγῆς γενόμενος*, "falling on his face." This is also the reading of the oldest Latin version of the Acts, the Itala, which has *dejectus in faciem*, "being thrown upon his face." The Vulgate *suspensus* must therefore be explained as a piece of free translation.

His bowels gushed out. St. Matthew (xxvii. 5) tells us that Judas "hanged himself with a halter," in all probability from the bough of a tree. If the bough or the halter broke, he would fall on his face, with the result here described. Comparing this account with St. Matthew's, we further perceive that the priests bought the very field where Judas destroyed himself.

19. The words "in their tongue" and "that is, the field of blood" should be enclosed in brackets. They are inserted by St. Luke for the use of the Gentile readers. It is not likely that St. Peter would have explained a Jewish term to Jewish listeners. The "for" of verse 20 refers back to verse 16.

20. For it is written in the book of Psalms (Psalms lxxviii. and cviii.): "Let their habitation," &c. These Psalms literally refer to the punishments in store for the enemies of the Psalmist; but from this passage we learn that he was also directed by the Holy Ghost to foretell herein the treason and punishments of Judas.

dwelt therein: and Let another take his bishopric. must be made a witness with us of his resurrection.

21. Wherefore of these men who have been with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, 23. And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

22. Beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein he was taken up from us, one of these 24. And, praying, they said: Thou, O Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two thou hast chosen,

His bishopric—his office. *Ἐπίσκοπος* etymologically means "an overseer"; in classical Greek it denoted an officer in charge of a large tract of territory. Later on, the word was employed to designate the highest order of the clergy. (See notes on xiv. 22, xx. 28.) Here it is used in a more general sense.

21. Of these men who have been with us all the time. These were probably the seventy-two referred to in St. Luke x. 1. The qualifications required in the candidates were that they should be familiar with our Lord's life, with His coming in and going out amongst them from His baptism by John till His ascension into heaven.

22. A witness with us of His resurrection. The doctrine of the Resurrection was the cardinal truth of Christianity. If this were established the credibility of the rest followed. Hence it was important that it should be proclaimed by trustworthy eye-witnesses.

23. They appointed two. That is, the body of the faithful with the Apostles appointed them. It was not unusual in early days to consult the faithful before the selection of Bishops, but the appointment was always from above, not from below—as here, from our Lord (see verse 24).

Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus. Barsabas means the Son of Sabas. If Sabas was the name of his father, he could not have been, as we might otherwise be tempted to think, the Joseph mentioned in Matt. xiii. 55 as one of our Lord's kinsmen. But Barsabas may mean only "Son of Wisdom," just as Barnabas meant "Son of Consolation." Matthias ("Gift of God") is the same name as Matthew.

24. Thou, O Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men. This prayer was evidently addressed to our Lord, to whom it belonged to appoint His Apostles (cp. verse 2). Hence

25. To take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas hath by transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place.

26. And they gave them lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

it is a noticeable proof of the faith of the disciples in our Lord's divinity. Cp. vii. 58, 59 for a similar prayer, and John ii. 24, vi. 65 for evidence that they knew our Lord could read hearts. The disciples believed that our Lord had already made His choice; they now pray Him to make it known.

25. To take the place of this ministry (κληρος). To take the share or inheritance of Judas in the apostolic ministry.

From which Judas hath by transgression fallen (παρέβη)

From which Judas turned aside or deserted.

That he might go to his own place. A euphemistic expression for Hell. Some, always anxious to soften down the mention of Hell, do violence to the words by referring them to Matthias undertaking his own duties as Apostle. But Christ Himself called Judas "the Son of Perdition" (John xvii. 12).

26. They gave them lots (ἔδωκαν κλήρους αὐτῶν). "They gave their lots." The names of the two were probably written on small tablets to be cast into an urn. The lot that was first drawn would be regarded as God's choice in the matter.

There was nothing indefensible in the conduct of the Apostles in putting so important an election to the chances of lot-casting. The two candidates had been chosen after earnest prayer, the merits of both were so striking that it was not possible to prefer one to the other. The Apostles doubtless considered that it was a more reverent way to ascertain the will of the Searcher of hearts by casting lots than by taking votes. There was, moreover, the sanction of the old law for casting lots (Prov. xvi. 33; Lev. xvi. 8).

QUESTIONS.

1. Quote the discourse of our Lord to the Apostles before His Ascension.

2. Give the two accounts of the Ascension as recorded in Acts and St. Luke.

3. Quote and explain the words of the Angel to the disciples after the Ascension.

4. From what place did our Lord ascend?

5. Who were they "that went up into an upper room"?

6. Reconcile the two accounts of Judas's death as recorded in Acts and St. Matthew.

7. What passages prophetic of Judas's fall did Peter quote?

8. Who were nominated as candidates to fill the place of Judas; what qualifications were required?

9. How was the appointment finally made?

10. Recite the prayer of the faithful.

11. Explain the terms, "the former treatise," "the promise of the Father," "baptized with the Holy Ghost," "times or moments," "an upper room," "part of this ministry," "his bishopric," "to his own place," "a sabbath day's journey."

12. Describe Mount Olivet.

13. Explain with reference to the context:—

(a) All things which Jesus began to do and teach.

(b) Giving commands by the Holy Ghost.

(c) Eating with them.

(d) Wilt Thou restore the kingdom to Israel?

(e) Which the Father has put in His own power.

(f) Witnesses to Me in all Judea, Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth.

(g) They were persevering in prayer.

(h) Show which of these two Thou hast chosen?

(i) They gave them lots

CHAPTER II.

THE HOLY GHOST COMES DOWN ON THE APOSTLES—vv. 1-4.

1. AND when the days¹ of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in the same place. came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming; and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

2. And suddenly there 3. And there appeared to

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¹ Day of Pentecost was.

1 "Days" is the Vulgate reading, and also that of the Fathers, but the Greek MSS. have "day." If we read "days," we must understand them to be the fifty days from the Pasch—*i.e.*, from the first day of the Pasch (Lev. xxiii. 15, 16)—which were accomplished when the Pentecost arrived. If we take the singular, we must understand it to be the fiftieth day itself, which was accomplished by having arrived. "Pentecost" means "fiftieth" ("day" understood). This feast was the second of the three great annual feasts of the Jews (see Exod. xxiii. 14-18, and note on Luke ii. 40). Pentecost was often called the Feast of Weeks—*i.e.*, of the completion of the seven weeks from the Pasch. It (1) celebrated the gathering in of the grain harvest (Exod. xxiii. 16), and (2) commemorated the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, supposed by the Jews to have taken place fifty days after the departure from Egypt. It was, therefore, a very suitable day for the gathering in of the fruits of the Passion and the writing of the New Law by the fingers of the Holy Spirit on the "fleshy tables of the heart" (Jer. xxxi. 33; 2 Cor. iii. 3).

Together in the same place. Probably in the same upper room.

2. A mighty wind coming. Better, "A strong breath borne along." Πνοή, the word used for breath, is that from which πνεῦμα, "spirit," is derived.

3. And there appeared to them cloven tongues as if were of fire. Διαμερίζομεναι (Lat., *dispartita*) rather means

them cloyen tongues as it were of fire : and it sat upon each of them :

4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost ;

“divided (among those present so that one rested on each of them).”

Tongues as it were of fire. That is, fiery appearances in the form of tongues—like the flame of a candle. There is no reason for supposing that they were real tongues. Ἐκάθισε, “it” (i.e., one of them) “settled down on each.” Fire is an appropriate figure of the action of the Holy Spirit, for (1) it purifies, (2) it enkindles, (3) it enlightens.

4. They were filled with the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, proceeds from the Father and the Son. Ghost is the old English for “spirit,” and “spirit” is a Latin word meaning “a breathing.” The Father, in contemplating the Son, expresses or breathes out His love. This breathing, or Spirit, in a feeble way gives us an idea of the relations between the three Divine Persons. It is on the doctrine of the Holy Ghost that the Greek Church differs from the Catholic. They hold that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father only ; hence in the Nicene Creed they leave out the word “Filioque” in the article “Qui ex Patre Filioque procedit” (“Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son”). It was agreed at the Council of Florence, 1439, in which both Churches joined, that the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son is the true Catholic one. The Eastern Church was on the point of returning to the Unity of Christendom, when the Turks attacked and seized Constantinople, on the very day of Pentecost, 1453, and threw everything into confusion.

They began to speak with divers tongues. Ἑτέρας means “different”—that is, languages different from those natural to the speakers. It was to symbolize how this power was the gift of the Holy Spirit that the mighty breathing was heard and the tongues of fire were seen. The Apostles did not receive the power as a permanent gift, for else they would have used it regularly, and St. Paul would have been able to understand Lycaonian. (Cp. xiv. 10.) The gift seems to have been used for prayer, not for teaching (cp. x. 46, xix. 6 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 14), and was bestowed that unbelievers might be led to faith

All Jerusalem is stirred up by the miracle—vv. 5-13.

5. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6. And when this voice was made,¹ the multitude came together, and was confounded in mind, because that every one heard them speaking in his own tongue.

7. And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these who speak Galileans?

8. And how have we every one heard our own tongue wherein we were born?

9. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea,

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¹ This was noised abroad.

by the miracle. It also symbolized the consecration of all tongues to the service of God, which followed now that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was broken down. Nevertheless, there have been times when this gift has been granted for the purpose of preaching; as, for instance, is recorded in the lives of St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Francis Xavier.

5. **Jews, devout men of every nation.** They were Jews by descent, but Jews of the Dispersion, who had been born and brought up in different regions, but were now dwelling (*κατοικοῦντες*) in the Holy City, the better to exercise themselves in practices of devotion.

6. **When this voice was made** (*γενομένης τῆς φωνῆς*). "When the sound (of the rushing wind) was heard." *Confounded in mind* (*συνεχύθη*)—i.e., struck with amazement, at the sound of their own languages, the languages of the countries in which they had been born, spoken by these Galileans.

8. **How have we heard our own tongue wherein we were born?** From this it is clear that the speaking with tongues was not a mere inarticulate utterance—"ecstatic utterances of rapturous devotion"—as some have explained it. The gift was a sudden communication of the power of speaking languages which were real, though previously unknown to the speakers. The enumeration begins in the Far East and advances westward.

9 **The Parthians** occupied the territory now known as Afghanistan, Beloochistan, Chorasán, and Turkestan. *Medes*, the nation dwelling on the north-west of Persia.

14 THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—ii. 10-14.

and Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia,

10. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome,

11. Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians, we have heard them speak

in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

12. And they were all astonished, and wondered, saying one to another : What meaneth this ?

13. But others, mocking, said : These men are full of new wine.

The first discourse of St. Peter to the people of Jerusalem—
vv. 14-40.

14. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them : Ye men of Judea, and all

you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you, and with your ears receive my words.

Elamites, Persians. Mesopotamia, the territory lying between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Cappadocia, one of the eastern provinces of Asia Minor. Pontus, a province to the north of Cappadocia. Asia, the Roman province of that name which comprised the western part of Asia Minor.

10. Phrygia, Pamphylia, two west central provinces of Asia Minor. *The parts of Libya about Cyrene, a district in the north of Africa (Libya) between Egypt and Carthage.*

Strangers of Rome, Jews also, and proselytes. Better, "Romans sojourning there (Jerusalem), both Jews (by birth) and proselytes (converts to Judaism)." These proselytes were of two classes, the "proselytes of justice," and the "proselytes of the gate." See note on xii. 43.

13. Mocking, said : These men are full of new wine (γλεῦκος) —sweet wine, a more intoxicating drink than the ordinary wine. The burning fervour of the Apostles under the influence of the Spirit suggested this taunt.

14. Peter standing up with the eleven. On this important occasion Peter is exhibited to representatives of the whole world as the mouthpiece of the Apostles and of the Church. The contrast between his boldness now and his former timidity should be noticed.

Men of Judea—i.e., natives of South Palestine. You that dwell in Jerusalem—many of whom were not, as the enumeration has shown, of Judean birth.

15. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day : the Lord,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh : and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.
16. But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel :
17. And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith
18. And upon my servants, indeed, and upon my hand-

15. It is but the third hour of the day. The Jews counted their hours from sunrise ; the third hour corresponds to our 9 a.m. It was one of the hours of public prayer. On their great festivals the Jews rigorously fasted till the hour of sacrifice. The charge was therefore preposterous.

16. By the prophet Joel. Joel was one of the earliest of the prophets. We cannot say exactly when he lived, but probably it was about 800 B.C.

17. And it shall come to pass in the last days. (Joel ii. 28.) "In the last days" (Hebr., "After this") is a phrase by which the ancient prophets designate the Messianic age. (Cp. Isa. ii. 2 ; Mich. iv. 1.) It was the final stage of man's life on earth to which the preceding period was preparatory.

My Spirit upon all flesh. That God's gifts were through His Spirit outpoured upon men is commonly said in the Old Testament, although the personality of the Spirit was not then so clearly stated. The emphasis is on the "all flesh." The outpouring should in those days be no longer limited, but universal.

And your sons . . . dreams. This is an expansion of the statement that all flesh should receive of the Spirit. Its effects should be seen in young and old, in men and in women.

18. And upon my servants and upon my handmaids. "My" is wanting in the Hebrew of Joel. He means that not even the slaves of either sex shall be excluded from the gift. He refers to such as were not of Hebrew descent (cp. Isaiah xiv. 1, 2), and means (or, at least, the Holy Ghost who inspired Joel means) thereby that Gentiles as well as slaves shall share in the abundant blessing.

They shall prophesy. The outpouring of the Spirit will bestow upon the recipients even the miraculous gifts (or *charismata*) of prophecy and visions. This, as St. Peter claims, was strikingly fulfilled at Pentecost, and has

maids, will I pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

19. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

20. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and manifest day of the Lord cometh:

21. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall

call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as you also know:

23. This same, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have crucified and put to death by the hands of wicked men:

received further fulfilment since in various ways. But it would be a mistake to imagine that these gifts so widely bestowed were intended to supersede the regular government of the Church through her appointed pastors. Neither the prophet nor the Apostle says that every single Christian will receive these gifts, but **only that no class is excluded in the distribution of them.**

19, 20. And I will show wonders in the heaven. The prophet Joel goes on to prophesy that the abundant outpouring of the Spirit will be followed (at some subsequent time) by a day of judgment ushered in with terrible signs in the heaven and on the earth. (Cp. note on Luke xxi. 25.)

21. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord. This will be the condition of salvation in that Last Judgment, to prepare themselves for which all should use the gifts of the Spirit previously sent to them.

The Lord. In Joel, the word used is God's covenant name (usually rendered "Jehovah"), or the name by which He pledged Himself to be faithful to His covenant with Israel. The name of Jesus in the New Covenant takes the place of the other, and so St. Peter understands it.

22. A man approved of God among you. Better, "pointed out to you by God." The miracles and wonders and signs were God's fingers, so to speak, pointing Him out to us. They were called *δυνάμεις*, as works of Almighty power; *τέρατα*, as wonderful to behold; *σήμεια*, as signifying the Divine meaning

23. By the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. St. Peter wishes them to understand that the Passion and

- 24.** Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell,¹ as it was impossible that he should be detained by it.
- 25.** For David saith concerning him : I foresaw the Lord always before my face ; because he is at my right hand, that I may not be moved :
- 26.** For this my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced ; moreover, my flesh also shall rest in hope :
- 27.** Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

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¹ Sorrows of death.

death of Christ, although outwardly brought about by the designs of wicked men, were all foreknown, permitted, and arranged for in the eternal counsels of God. The whole series of future events is unrolled like one great picture under the eyes of God. The dispositions and actions of men are perfectly known to Him, nor does this interfere with their freedom of action. He can arrange to work up their free doings into His own plans, thereby bringing good out of evil.

- 24.** Having loosed the sorrows of hell. The Greek MSS. read "death" instead of "hell" ; and even the "infernium" of the Latin, translated "hell" in the Douay version, must mean the underworld or abode of the dead, which is but another way of describing death. Death is in itself a sorrowful thing, but God by raising up His Son delivered His sacred body from that sorrow. (Cp. Ps. xvii. 5, from which St. Peter quotes.)
- It was impossible that he should be detained by it.* Impossible because the Divine decree, which David had been allowed to see and announce, had willed the Resurrection.
- 25.** I foresaw the Lord always before my face. In the Psalm (xv.) David introduces the Messias as speaking. "I foresaw," or, "I saw in front of me" the Lord (standing there to be his Protector ; standing at his right hand so that no one might harm him).
- 26.** My flesh also shall rest in hope. That is, in the grave, in hope of a resurrection.
- 27.** Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. Better, "in Hades," where it went to console and deliver the Patriarchs who had died before Him, from the beginning onwards.
- Nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.* That is, the corruption of the grave, which would have been a great indignity to the most pure body of Jesus.

28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life : thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

29. Ye men, brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David, that he died and was buried ; and his sepulchre is with us to this present day.

30. Whereas, therefore, he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath, that of the fruit of

his loins one should sit upon his throne :

31. Foreseeing he spoke of the resurrection of Christ, for neither was he left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption.

32. This Jesus hath God raised up again, whereof we all are witnesses.

33. Being exalted, therefore, by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the

28. **Thou hast made known to me the ways of life.** Namely, by restoring Him to life through the Resurrection.

With Thy countenance. That is, with Thy presence Thou wilt rejoice me through eternity.

29. **Let me freely speak to you of David.** Without failing in respect to the great Patriarch, St. Peter could freely say that the words just quoted from the Royal Psalmist do not refer to him, since he died and was buried, as his tomb in their midst bore witness. The words, *then*, must have been spoken in the person of the Messias.

The tomb of David was one of the few allowed to be placed within the precincts of the Holy City. Much treasure at one time was contained within its walls ; Hyrcanus took therefrom three thousand talents to buy off Antiochus from the siege of Jerusalem. Herod the Great is also reported to have plundered the venerated shrine.

30. **Whereas, therefore, he was a prophet.** The true explanation, therefore, is that, being a prophet and having received a promise that he should have a successor who should be the Messias, David foresaw in prophecy that this Messias (or "Christ") should be raised from the dead. Note that St. Paul uses the same argument in his discourse at Antioch (Acts xiii. 35). Doubtless this formed part of the teaching of the "Apostolic Catechism." (Cp. Luke, Introd. p. vi.)

32. **Whereof we are witnesses.** Notice how he insists on this. (Cp. note on i. 8).

33. **Being exalted, therefore, by the right hand of God.** God the Father is conceived of as stretching out His right hand to raise up His Son. St. Peter now offers the

Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this which you see and hear.

34. For David did not ascend into heaven: but he himself said: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35. Until I make thy enemies thy footstool.

36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know most assuredly that God hath made

him Lord and Christ, this same Jesus, whom you have crucified.

37. Now when they had heard these things, they had compunction in their heart; and they said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles: What shall we do, men, brethren?

38. But Peter to them: Do penance,¹ (said he,) and be baptized every one of you

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¹ Repent.

true explanation of the miracle they have seen and heard; it is that Christ raised to share the throne of God in heaven has received and is sending, as He had promised, the Holy Spirit on His disciples. (Cp. John xv. 26, xvi. 7.)

34. **The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand.**

St. Peter had proved the Resurrection from Psalm xv. Now he proves the Ascension—which he had asserted in the last verse as a fact—from Psalm cix. There again occur words which were not verified in regard to David personally, and must therefore refer to the Messiah. St. Peter's appeal to this text becomes the more impressive when we remember how, in the same place, a few weeks earlier, our Lord had appealed to it. (Cp. Luke xx. 42.)

36. **God hath made Him Lord and Christ, this same Jesus.**

Notice the contrast. This Jesus, whom you crucified, is made by God, as the Psalm proves, Lord and anointed King of all men, being exalted to the very throne of God.

37. **They had compunction.** The truth thus forcibly stated pricked their hearts as it were with the dagger of self-reproach.

Men, brethren. They take up in the earnestness of their emotion the address St. Peter had used to them (verse 29). In their distress they appeal for help and guidance to the brotherly feelings of the Apostles.

38. **Do penance.** Christ had enjoined His Apostles to preach

in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins : and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are far off,

whomsoever the Lord our God shall call.

40. And with a great many other words did he testify and exhort them, saying : Save yourselves from this perverse generation.

“penance and the remission of sins in his name” (Luke xxiv. 47).

Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. That is, into the faith and religion of Jesus Christ. When they had thus been cleansed from sin and admitted into the Church of Jesus Christ, the Spirit which they had seen outpoured on others should be outpoured on them also.

We cannot infer from this verse that it is sufficient when baptizing to say, “I baptize thee in the name of Jesus Christ.” Catholic tradition, which is preserved from error, has taught us that the only valid form is that given in Matt. xxviii. 19. Hence we must understand that in the present passage St. Peter was not giving the Baptismal formula, but only describing the effect of Baptism, which is to incorporate us into the Church of Christ.

39. For the promise is to you (the promise of the Holy Ghost), and to all that are afar off (to all nations of the world). The universality of the Gospel message was, therefore, known to St. Peter at this time.

40. Save yourselves from this perverse generation. That is, from the wicked world, by entering the fold of Christ.

SUMMARY OF ST. PETER'S DISCOURSE.

St. Peter, as was usual with Jewish speakers addressing their own countrymen, bases his proof entirely upon appeals to the Holy Scriptures. (Cp. Acts, Pt. II., Appendix : St. Paul's Discourses.)

1st Point.—The coming of the Holy Ghost, seen and heard by so many, simply fulfils the prophecy of Joel (vv. 16-21).

2nd Point.—This Holy Spirit is sent by Jesus of Nazareth, whose life and miracles pointed Him out as the Son of God (vv. 22, 23).

3rd Point.—Although crucified by the Jews, by the power of God He was raised to life, as all the Apostles can bear witness. He is clearly, then, the Messiah to whom alone could the words of Psalm xv. apply ; for David did not speak in his own person, but prophesied of the Messiah (vv. 24-31).

4th Point.—Being the Messiah, He is now seated at the right hand of God, as Lord and Redeemer, as Psalm cix. declares (vv. 33-36).

5th Point.—Therefore let those who were listening do penance, become followers of Christ, and accept His baptism (vv. 38-40).

The conduct of the first converts—vv. 41-47.

41. They, therefore, that received his word were baptized: and there were added to *them* in that day about three thousand souls.

42. And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communion of the breaking of bread,¹ and in prayers.

43. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles in Jerusalem: and there was great fear in all.

44. And all they that

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¹ In the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread.

41. They were baptized. It is difficult to understand how so many could have been baptized together by immersion, especially as water is scarce within Jerusalem. Could they have been baptized by affusion, as in our days?

42. In the doctrine of the Apostles. Better, "In listening to their teaching" (*διδασχῆν*). The three chief features of their Christian life are mentioned—they hear instructions, they receive Holy Communion, they join in (public) prayers. The Greek adds a fourth feature, "fellowship" (*κοινωνία*), i.e., close union of heart and mind (cp. iv. 32).

In the communication of the breaking of bread (*κοινωνία*). The term used by St. Paul for Holy Communion (1 Cor. x. 16). Through this Sacrament we are united with our Lord and also with one another.

The breaking of bread (*τοῦ ἄρτου*). Notice the article, "of the bread"—that is, the Blessed Sacrament, called the bread because it is our spiritual food clothed with the outward appearance of bread (and wine). "Breaking," that is, in "eating." To "break bread with one another" was to divide it so that all ate together. Note the plural, "prayers" (*προσεύχαις*), which seems to imply (public) prayer at stated times.

43. Fear came upon every soul. The natural effect of the wonders that were happening and revealing the power and presence of God. (Cp. notes on Luke v. 8, viii. 25.)

There was great fear in all. These words are omitted in the Greek.

44. They that believed were together (*ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*). Formed one society. The converts, rich and poor, met together for instructions, prayers, and exercises of mutual charity.

believed were together, and had all things common.

45. They sold their possessions and goods, and divided them to all, according as every one had need.

46. And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart,

and had all things common. Thus one of the first results of the fervour of the first Christians was the practice of evangelical poverty. Not that all were compelled to this observance, for Ananias had perfect freedom to keep or renounce his property (v. 4). It was left then, as now, to the free choice of each individual. The number, however, of the first converts at Jerusalem who voluntarily renounced their goods was so great that it seemed to be the almost universal practice.

46. Continuing daily with one accord in the temple. *ὁμοθυμαδόν*, "with one mind"; there was a perfect union of mind and heart among them. *Προσκαρτεροῦντες*, "keeping up (their visits) in the temple." (Cp. Luke xxiv. 53.) Though the ancient rites were now superseded by the new, the discontinuance of the former was, by our Lord's appointment, to be gradual, so that the passing from the one to the other might be the more easy. Every day in the temple there was, in the morning, the sacrifice of the lamb, followed by prayer and the reading of the Law in the Hall of the Sanhedrim, and then by the offering of incense on the Golden Altar. In the afternoon, at three o'clock, there was another short service, at the close of which the priest gave the benediction from Num. vi. 24-26. This last service is meant in Acts iii. 6. But besides these fixed services, the temple courts were places of resort for prayer and private sacrifices, and other sacred exercises throughout the day.

Breaking bread (*κλῶντες ἄρτον*). The article is wanting here, and the doubt arises whether Holy Communion is intended, or only the ordinary meals. Coming so soon after verse 42, the former meaning is suggested, but the words immediately following, "they took their meal with gladness," point to the latter. The probability is, however, that Holy Communion is intended. As our Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament after a supper, it was the custom of the early Church to meet together, first for a simple supper, in which the idea of brotherly love and charity rather than of feasting was prominent, and then to finish with the Holy Eucharist.

47. Praising God together, Lord added daily to their and having favour with society such as should be all the people. And the saved.

The present verse tells us that, as they went to the temple for the worship common to themselves with the other Jews, so they met alternately in one another's houses for the celebration of the peculiarly Christian rite. As these suppers, or *Agapæ* ("Love-feasts") were, as time went on, abused (cp. 1 Cor. xi. 17-34), they were gradually discontinued, and fasting Communion in the early morning became the law of the Church.

47. The Lord added to their society such as should be saved (*σωζόμενοι*), "those who were in the way of salvation." "To their society" (*ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό*). In the Greek these words open the next chapter.

QUESTIONS.

1. What was the Jewish feast of Pentecost?
2. Relate what occurred on the day of Pentecost.
3. Enumerate and briefly describe the regions from which representatives were present on the day of Pentecost.
4. Give an outline of St. Peter's discourse.
5. What effect had it upon the hearers?
6. What references to the Old Testament did he produce?
7. Show from this chapter the necessity of the Sacrament of Baptism. What is the only correct form?
8. What was the conduct of the first believers? Enumerate the points in their lives which the Evangelist holds up to admiration.
9. Describe the community of goods in the early Church.
10. What was the character of their prayer?
11. Explain the terms, "diverse tongues," "divers tongues," "new wine," "third hour of the day," "the last days," "miracles, wonders, signs," "breaking bread," "prophecy."
12. What is the Catholic doctrine regarding the Holy Ghost? in what does the Greek Church differ?
13. Explain with reference to the context :—
 - (a) Tongues as it were of fire.
 - (b) Strangers of Rome, Jews also and proselytes.
 - (c) I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.
 - (d) I will show wonders in the heaven above.
 - (e) Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
 - (f) Him by the determinate design of God you crucified.
 - (g) Having loosed the sorrows of hell.
 - (h) Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.
 - (i) Thou hast made known to me the ways of life.
 - (j) Let me freely speak to you of David.
 - (k) The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand.
 - (l) In the communication of the breaking of bread.

CHAPTER III.

PETER AND JOHN HEAL THE LAME MAN—**vv. 1-11.**

1. Now Peter and John went up to the temple at the ninth hour of prayer.¹ which is called the Beautiful, that he might beg alms of them that went into the temple.
2. And a certain man, who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple
3. He, when he had seen Peter and John about to go into the temple, begged to receive an alms.

A. V.

¹ At the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

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1. **Peter and John.** They had been partners in the fishing trade (Luke v. 10), and seem to have been firm friends. At one time, indeed, St. John became jealous of St. Peter's primacy (Matt. xx. 20, 21; Mark x. 35-45), but after the Resurrection they are found again closely united (John xx. 3-10, xxi. 20, 21). In the early days of their ministry they appear to have been much together. (Cp. viii. 14.)

Hour of prayer. See notes on ii. 15, 46, to which may be added that the Jews were in the habit of praying at the third (9 a.m.), sixth (12.0), and ninth (3 p.m.) hours. This mode of reckoning can be traced in the Terce, Sext, and None of the Divine Office.

2. **Lame from his mother's womb.** That is, for forty years. (Cp. iv. 22.) The miracle was therefore very striking, the more so as the man was so well known (verse 10).

The gate which is called Beautiful. This name does not occur elsewhere, and so it is a little uncertain which gate it was. Some think it was the gate of the outer enclosure on the south-west, or else that on the east leading from the Mount of Olives. Others think it was the gate leading into the temple itself, that is, into the Court of the Women, its outermost court. Of these three possibilities the second is somewhat favoured by

4. But Peter, with John, fixing his eyes upon him, said: Look upon us.

5. And he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something from them.

6. But Peter said: Silver and gold I have none; but what I have I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.

7. And having taken him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles¹ became firm.

8. And he, leaping up, stood, and walked; and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God:

A. V.

¹ Ankle bones.

5. Hoping that he should receive something from them. That is, some alms; as St. Peter's words, which were a reply to his thoughts, show. The miracle was done, therefore, not in view of the man's faith, but of that of the Apostles. This is because it was intended not so much for the man himself as for others generally—that they might have Divine testimony to the ministry of the Apostles. Still, the man's dispositions were evidently good, and so faith soon followed (verse 8). (Cp. the similar case at Lystra—xiv. 9.)

6. Silver and gold I have none. The Apostles were practising the counsels of evangelical poverty.
In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. By the power and authority of Jesus, the Nazarene whom the Jews despised. The name, being His name, was endowed with power from God. (Cp. ii. 36, iv. 10, and the promise in Mark xvi. 17.)

7. His feet and soles became firm (*βάσεις καὶ σφυρά*). The soles and ankle-bones of his feet, so that they could support the weight of the body.

8. Leaping up, stood . . . leaping, and praising God. He kept leaping about in the joyful sense of his restored powers. We feel that it is just what would have happened, and the simple but life-like account is an assurance to us of the genuineness of the narrative.

Into the temple: then filling with people who, like the Apostles, had come up for prayer. The word for temple here is *ἱερόν*, not *ναός*. The *ναός* was the temple itself, or the two sanctuaries, the Holy and the Holy of Holies. The *ἱερόν* comprised all the buildings and courts within the temple enclosure. The phrase "entered into the *ἱερόν*" seems, therefore, to imply that the Beautiful Gate was a gate to the enclosure.

9. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. amazement at that which had happened to him.

10. And they knew him, that it was he who sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and 11. And as he held Peter and John, all the people, amazed, ran to them to the porch which is called Solomon's.

St. Peter's discourse to the witnesses of this miracle—vv. 12-26.

12. Which Peter seeing, made answer to the people: Ye men of Israel, why wonder you at this? or why look you upon us, as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk? 13. The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and denied before the face of

10. They were filled with wonder and amazement. The utmost astonishment and admiration; for the circumstances of the man were so well known as to leave no doubt that a wonderful miracle had been wrought.

11. As he held Peter and John. That is, clung to them as his benefactors, fearing perhaps a relapse should he be separated from them.

The porch which is called Solomon's. That is, the colonnade on the eastern boundary of the temple enclosure. This statement, therefore, points to the eastern gate of the enclosure as being the Beautiful Gate. It is not so likely that the Apostles first went into the sacred building and then came out again to Solomon's Porch. The porch was not itself built by Solomon, but it was on the site of an older porch built by him.

12. Made answer. Their manner, if not their words, was an appeal to him to speak.

Men of Israel. He calls them by the covenant name to remind them of the promise now fulfilled.

As if by our strength we had made this man to walk. The humility of the Apostles shrank from the open admiration of the people; they hastened to explain that the miracle was entirely due to the power of God, of which they were but the ministers.

13. The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus. The God who spoke to their fathers, calling Himself

Pilate, when he judged he should be released.

14. But you denied the Holy and the Just One, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.

15. But the author of life¹ you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

16. And his name, through the faith of his name, hath made this man strong, whom you have seen and known; and the faith which is by him hath given this perfect soundness in the sight of you all.

17. And now, brethren, I know that you did it through ignorance, as also your rulers.

A. V.

¹ Prince of life.

"their God," and making a covenant with them (cp. Gen. xxii. 16-18, xxvi. 2-5, xxviii. 13-19; Ex. iii. 6, 15; and note on Luke xx. 37, 38), is He who has now fulfilled the covenant by glorifying His Son Jesus.

14. But you denied (even unto the face of Pilate) that He was your Messias (Luke xxiii. 18-21).

The Holy and Just One—i.e., Him who was in a unique manner the Holy and Just One. Cp. vii. 52, xxii. 14, and note the antithesis, "a murderer." *The Just One*. A title frequently given to our Lord in the early Church.

15. The Author of life. The Author or Leader of eternal life. They killed Him who by His Resurrection was preparing to lead every soul of man into the realms of eternal life. Note again the antithesis between "author of life" on the one hand and "murderer" or "destroyer of life" and "killed" on the other. Note, too, how he insists on his office of witness.

16. And His name, through the faith of His name, hath made this man strong, whom you have seen and known. The power was in the name itself, but faith in the same power was requisite in the person who invoked its use, or for whose sake it was invoked. In this way faith became the instrument through which the miracle-worker acted. But this faith in its turn is wrought in us through Christ.

17. I know that you did it through ignorance. He had told them plainly their sin, but now in his tenderness he tries to excuse them, and his excuse is that which he had learnt from his Master—"They know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). They had known of necessity that they were guilty of a great crime. But they had not known (through their fault, alas!) who He was.

18. But those things which God had foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19. Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out:

20. That, when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send him who hath been preached unto you, Jesus Christ,

21. Whom heaven indeed must receive until the times of the restitution of all things,

As also your rulers. It must have required the exercise of an almost heroic act of charitable interpretation on the part of the Apostles to acquit even the rulers of knowingly and wilfully compassing the death of Christ.

18. But . . . that His Christ should suffer. The "but" is adversative to the difficulty which in their ignorance they had alleged. They had said, "Were He the Messiah He could not have been thus outraged and slain." St. Peter answers, "On the contrary, it was prophesied that just these very things would befall the Messiah." The prophecy is by Isaiah, chap. liii: (Cp. viii. 30-35; and notes on Luke xxiv. 26, 44.)

20. That, when the times of refreshment shall come. As it stands in our version and the Vulgate, from which our version is made, the sentence is incomplete. But *ὅπως ἂν* means not "when," but "in order that." Translate, therefore, "so that the times of refreshment may come," &c. The times of refreshment are those attending our Lord's second coming, which to the wicked will be times of torment, but to the good and the penitent times of rest sent as it were from the face of God. (Cp. for similar phrases Luke xxi. 28; Heb. iv. 1-9; 2 Peter iii. 13; and Apoc. xiv. 13.)

And He shall send Him who hath been preached unto you, Jesus Christ. Better, "announced beforehand," or, if another Greek reading is followed, "destined."

21. Whom heaven must receive. Christ's throne of glory must, in the meantime, be in heaven, which He will not quit *until the times of the restitution of all things.* St. Peter here refers to the belief that, after the second coming of Christ, God will make a new heaven and a new earth (Apoc. xxi. 1-7), and all creation will be restored to its original beauty and incorruption. It is to this that St. Paul refers in Rom. viii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 24.

which God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets from the beginning of the world.

22. For Moses indeed said: A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you out of your brethren, like unto me; him you shall hear according to all things whatsoever he shall speak to you.

23. And it shall be, that every soul which will not

hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people.

24. And all the prophets, from Samuel and afterwards, that have spoken, have foretold these days.

25. You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made to our fathers, saying to Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets.

The ancient prophets had foretold this restitution of all things. (See especially Sophonias iii.) It is unscriptural, however, to infer that even the wicked will eventually be restored. (Cp. Apoc., *ibid.* verse 8.)

22. Moses indeed said, in Deut. xviii. 15. That this prophecy was understood generally by the Jews of our Lord's time to refer to the Messiah is clear from John i. 21, 45, v. 46. The last of these passages, together with the present passage, show that the interpretation is correct. Our Lord was like Moses in being the Mediator of a Covenant.

24. All the prophets, from Samuel downwards. Samuel was the first great prophet after Moses; moreover, he founded the schools of the prophets: his words, therefore, were of the highest weight. (Cp. 1 Kings xix. 20 with 3 Kings xx. 35, 4 Kings ii. 3, 5, 7.) No Messianic prophecy is on record as made by Samuel himself, but perhaps the allusion is to 2 Reg. vii. 12-16, for the two first Books of Kings are in the Hebrew called Books of Samuel. Among the more important prophecies of Christ are Psalms ii., xv., xxi., xliv., lxxxviii., cix.; Isa. ii. 2, vii. 14, xi. 1-5, xl. 1-11, liii.; Jer. xxiii. 5-7, xxxi. 31-34; Ezech. xxxiv. 20-31; Dan. ix. 23-27; Joel iii. 28-32; Mich. iv., v.; Hagg. ii. 6-9; Zach. ix. 9; Mal. iii. 1-3.

25. You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant. That is, "those for whose sake they were." Cp. the similar phrase, "Children of the kingdom" (Matt. viii. 12). For the covenant, see Gen. xxii. 18, compared with *ibid.* xviii. 18, xii. 3

26. To you first, God, should convert himself from raising up his Son, sent him his wickedness. to bless you, that every one

26. To you first, God, raising His Son, sent Him—*i.e.*, "God, having raised His Son, has sent Him first to you Jews to bless you." It was for this reason that our Lord preached only to the Jews (*cp.*, too, *Matt. x. 6*), and directed the Apostles to begin with Jerusalem in their preaching (*Luke x. 47, xxiv. 47*).

SUMMARY OF ST. PETER'S DISCOURSE IN THE TEMPLE.

1st Point.—He deprecates the admiration paid to him by ascribing the miracle to the power of the name of Jesus.

2nd Point.—This is He whom you denied and crucified.

3rd Point.—It was perhaps done in ignorance, but now, with your eyes enlightened, repent, that you may obtain everlasting life, and hasten the second coming of Christ.

4th Point.—This coming has been so clearly declared by Moses and the prophets; how can you refuse to believe?

5th Point.—As you are chosen people, the heirs of the promise of Abraham, it is your privilege to have the Gospel preached first to you.

QUESTIONS.

1. Relate the history of the healing of the lame man in the temple.
2. Explain the terms, "ninth hour of prayer," "the gate which is called Beautiful," "the porch which is called Solomon's."
3. Give a summary of St. Peter's discourse.
4. What references does he make to the writings of the Old Testament?
5. Explain with reference to the context :—
 - (a) Look upon us.
 - (b) Silver and gold I have none.
 - (c) His feet and soles received strength.
 - (d) As he held Peter and John.
 - (e) As if done by our strength and power.
 - (f) The Author of life you killed.
 - (g) His name, through the faith of His name, hath made this man strong.
 - (h) I know that you did it through ignorance.
 - (i) That when the times of refreshment shall come.
 - (j) He shall send to you Jesus Christ.
 - (k) Whom indeed heaven must receive.
 - (l) Until the times of the restitution of all things.
 - (m) In thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed.
 - (n) To you first, God, raising up His Son, sent Him to bless you.

CHAPTER IV.

PETER AND JOHN ARE APPREHENDED—VV. 1-7.

1. AND when they were speaking to the people, the priests and the officer¹ of the temple and the Sadducees came unto them,

2. Being grieved that they taught the people, and declared in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

3. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody till the next day: for now it was evening.

4. But many of them who had heard the word believed; and the number of the men was made five thousand.

A. V.

¹ Captain.

1. **Officer of the temple** (*στρατηγός*). Literally, a military commander, but here the person meant was the captain of the temple guard, a priest in command of bands of Levites, whose duty it was to keep order in the temple.

Sadducees. A name derived from Sadoc, their founder. One of the Jewish sects, who held that the Pentateuch alone of the Sacred Books was inspired. They had no belief either in the future life or in rewards or in punishments. It was doubtless they who had set in movement the officer of the temple, and caused him to arrest the Apostles for preaching the doctrine of the Resurrection, a doctrine particularly obnoxious to them.

Came unto them (*ἐπίστησαν*). Came suddenly upon them.

2. **Being grieved (indignant) that they declared in Jesus the Resurrection.** That is, that "in the likeness of Jesus men may rise again." (Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 12.)

3. **It was evening.** The events since iii. 1 had taken about three hours.

4. **The number of the men was made five thousand.** Shortly before they were reckoned at three thousand, now the number reached (*ἐγένεθη*) five thousand men, which implies that there was a corresponding number of women and children. Hence the futility of attempting to stop the work by arresting the Apostles.

5. And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and ancients, and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem :
6. And Annas the high priest, and Caiphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the priestly race.
7. And setting them in the midst, they asked : By what power, or in what name, have ye done this ?

St. Peter's discourse before the Jewish rulers—vv. 8-22.

8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them : Ye rulers of the people and ancients, hear :
9. If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole ;
10. Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you cruci-

5. **The rulers, ancients, and scribes were gathered together.** This was the great council of the seventy-two, termed the Sanhedrim. It was composed of the heads of the twelve tribes and twenty-four chief priests. To these was added a number of elders and scribes, or teachers of the law. (Cp. note on Luke xxii. 66.)
6. **Annas the high priest.** He was not strictly the high priest, for he had been deposed by the Romans. But Luke calls him high priest here to the exclusion of Caiphas, and in his Gospel (iii. 2) in conjunction with Caiphas. Possibly the Jews considered Annas to be still their lawful high priest (see note on Luke iii. 2). Nothing further is known of John and Alexander.
7. **By what power, or in what name, have you done this ?** Literally, by what kind of power (*ποιᾷ*). The council seem to suggest some magic or demon invocation as the means by which this thing (that is, the cure of the cripple) was done. Notice the *ἐπεὶ* at the very end of the question—"Have people like *you* done such a thing?"
9. **If we are examined concerning the good deed.** It was a strange thing that they should be dragged, like criminals, before this tribunal for having done a good deed to the cripple. Still, if they have to explain such an act they reply, "Be it known, &c."
10. **Whom you crucified.** Note the change wrought in St. Peter by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. He who but a

fied, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

11. This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12. Nor is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.

13. Now they, seeing the constancy of Peter and John, knowing that they were illiterate and ignorant men, they wondered; and they knew them, that they had been with Jesus.

14. Seeing also the man standing with them who had been healed, they could say nothing against it.

15. But they commanded them to go aside out of the

short time since was frightened by a servant maid, is now courageous enough publicly to upbraid the rulers of Israel.

11. **This is the stone rejected by you the builders.** St. Peter is probably recalling to their minds the words of his Divine Master addressed to these very rulers a few days before the Crucifixion. (See note on the passage Luke xx. 17.) The stone is a figure of our Lord rejected by the Jews, but ordained by God to be the corner stone of the building. St. Peter was evidently struck by our Lord's use of this prophecy. (Cp. his First Epistle ii. 4-8.)

12. **There is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.** The "name" here stands for the person and power of Jesus. It is Christ Himself who is the cause of our salvation, but to invoke Him and ask Him to save us we must call Him by name. Hence the salvation is, by a natural figure of speech, ascribed to the name. (Cp. Philip. ii. 10.)

13. **Illiterate and ignorant men.** Ἀγράμματοι, lit., "unlettered," but it means unversed in rabbinical lore; ἰδιῶται, laymen, persons without authority or qualifications for teaching.

They wondered. It was more astonishing to the rulers to hear such powerful discourse from such men as the fishermen of Galilee than it was to hear Jesus, whose refinement and natural dignity marked Him out as an inspired speaker.

They knew. Better, they "began to recognize them" (ἐπεγίνωσκον).

14. **The man standing on his feet, completely cured.** With such clear evidence before the eyes of the people it was difficulty to condemn the Apostles.

council; and they conferred among themselves,

16. Saying: What shall we do to these men? for a miracle indeed hath been done by them, conspicuous to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: it is manifest, and we cannot deny it.

17. But that it may be no further divulged among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak no more in this name to any man.

18. And calling them, they charged them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19. But Peter and John, answering, said to them: If it be just in the sight of God to hear you rather than God, judge ye.

20. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21. But they, threatening them, sent them away, not finding how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified what had been done, in that which had come to pass.

22. For the man was above forty years old in whom that miraculous cure had been wrought.

16. A miracle hath been done . . . and we cannot deny it. A sad example of the manner in which the rulers hardened their hearts against the voice of God.

17. Let us threaten them (*ἀπειλῇ ἀπειλησώμεθα*). "With a threat let us threaten them"—i.e., "That it may not be further divulged let us severely threaten them." Better, "spread abroad" (*διερεμήθῃ*). The "it" refers to the 'name' or, as we should say, to the movement. It was not the news of that particular sign which they wanted to suppress, for that would have been a hopeless attempt; but to stop the Apostles from working further miracles in the same name. They were to speak no more in this name to any one as they had done to the lame man.

19. If it be just to hear you rather than God, judge ye. "We ask you to decide whether it is just to obey you rather than God." By this appeal the Apostles placed the council in an awkward dilemma. No Jew could deny the duty of preferring the will of God so clearly manifested to the dictates of their own human law. (Cp. 2 Mach. vii. 30.) They therefore decline to answer, and take refuge in fresh threats.

Προσπειλησάμενοι, "having further threatened them."

The public prayer of the Church after the release of the Apostles—vv. 23-31.

23. And being let go, they came to their own company, and related all that the chief priests and ancients had said to them.

24. Who, when they had heard *them*, with one accord lifted up their voice to God, and said : Lord, thou art he that didst make heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them ;

25. Who in the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David thy servant, hast

said : Why have the gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things ?

26. The kings of the earth stood up; and the princes assembled together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27. For there were truly assembled in this city against thy holy Son Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of Israel,

28. To do what thy hand

24. With one accord lifted up their voice. Such language implies a solemn act of worship. Possibly the canticle was sung. But how came they to sing all together a set form of words like these, which, being so adapted to the occasion, must have been composed for it? Possibly St. Peter composed, and the others followed him; but, in any case, this relic of early Christian Psalmody is very precious.

Thou art He that didst make. They begin by celebrating God's power evidenced by His works. Note the word "Lord," or rather "Master" (δέσποτα). All things belong to Him.

25. Why have the gentiles raged? Seeing how great is God's power, what folly to fight against His decrees.

27. For there were truly assembled. In this verse they interpret the prophecy by the fulfilment. For "son" (παῖδα, not υἱόν) we may translate "servant," as in verse 25. Our Lord was the Son of God by nature, but also, in His humanity, the Servant of God by reason of this work entrusted to Him. (Cp. Isaias xlii. 1, liii. 11.)

28. To do what Thy hand and Thy counsel decreed to be done. "What." Better, "as much as" (ὅσα). God's counsel is His wisdom which decrees, His hand is His power which accomplishes.

36 THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES—iv. 29-34.

and thy counsel decreed to be done.

29. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant to thy servants, with all confidence to speak thy word,

30. In this, that thou stretch forth thy hand to cures, and signs, and won-

ders, to be done by the name of thy holy Son Jesus.

31. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were assembled; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with confidence.

The community of goods among the first Christians—

vv. 32-37.

32. And the multitude of the believers had but one heart and one soul: neither did any one of them say, that, of the things which he possessed, any thing was his own; but all things were common to them.

33. And with great power did the Apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord: and great grace was in them all.

34. For neither was there any one among them that wanted: for as many as were

Decreed. Better, "foreordained" (προώρισε). They intended to oppose God's purpose, but they only made themselves instruments for its accomplishment.

29, 30. **Grant to Thy servants, with all confidence to speak.** They had a natural shrinking from the terrors threatened, but trusted to God for the needful courage to face them.

31. **The place was shaken.** The power of the Spirit was allowed to show itself in shaking the house, that a sign of its presence might be seen.

32. **The believers had but one heart and one soul.** By their concord, their mutual charity, and by their obedience to authority.

All things were common to them. (See note on ii. 45.) The generous fervour of the neophytes still continued.

33. **Great grace was in them all.** "Great grace from God was bestowed upon them and appeared in them."

34. The great grace showed itself in this, that those who had possessions cast them into the common store, so that none were allowed to want. In so acting they were going beyond what was of obligation and giving vent to a free and generous spirit. It was the first outburst of that spirit of holy poverty which has since created the religious life.

owners of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold,

35. And laid it down before the feet of the apostles : and distribution was made to every man according as he had need.

36. And Joseph, who by

the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which, being interpreted, is the son of consolation,) a Levite, a Cyprian born,

37. Having land, sold it, and brought the price, and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

35. **The feet of the Apostles.** The Eastern custom was to lay offerings at the feet of another, not in his hands.

36. **Joseph surnamed Barnabas, son of consolation.** So the Vulgate translates the name given to this disciple by the Apostles. But Barnabas (= *Bar-nebhua*) signifies rather "son of prophecy" (or "preaching"), and *υἱὸς παρακλήσεως*, "son of exhortation." Hence it is clear we must understand his gift as one of influencing others, not of endearing himself to others. He was born in Cyprus, but probably went to Jerusalem for his education, and may have had for his master Gamaliel, and for his fellow-disciple Saul of Tarsus. It is held by some that Barnabas wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews under St. Paul's dictation.

Cyprus was so called by the Greeks from the copper mines worked there. The Gospel seems to have been planted very early in Cyprus, for the Cyprians were the first to preach the faith at Antioch (xi. 20). The island subsequently became the scene of St. Paul's devoted labours (xiii. 4).

37. **Having land.** This is noticeable, as Levites had towns in common, and not private property. (Cp. Num. xviii. 20, 21 ; Deut. x. 8, 9, &c.) But they may have been allowed to purchase private property (Jer. xxxii. 7-12), especially when it lay outside the Holy Land.

QUESTIONS.

1. Give the circumstances of the arrest of Peter and John in the temple and say how the Sanhedrim was composed.
2. Give St. Peter's speech before the Sanhedrim.
3. What was the decision of the rulers in regard to the Apostles ?
4. Recite the public prayer of the Church on the release of Peter and John, and describe its character.
5. What was the practice of the early Church with regard to community of goods ?

6. Explain the terms, "officer of the temple," "Sadducees," "Sanhedrim," "Levite."

7. Who were Annas and Caiphas, Barnabas?

8. How do you account for the fact that the opposition to the Apostles came chiefly from the Sadducees?

9. Explain with reference to the context :—

(a) They declared in Jesus the Resurrection.

(b) By what power or name have you done this?

(c) If we are examined concerning the good deed.

(d) This is the stone rejected by you, the builders.

(e) There is no other name under heaven whereby we may be saved.

(f) Nor is there salvation in any other.

(g) If it be just to hear you rather than God, judge ye.

(h) Why do the gentiles rage?

i) To do what thy hand and counsel decreed to be done.

CHAPTER V.

THE PUNISHMENT OF ANANIAS AND SAPHIRA-- vv. 1 II.

1. BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Saphira his wife, sold a field,

2. And by fraud kept part of the price of the field, his wife being conscious of it ; and bringing a certain part of it, laid it at the feet of the apostles.

3. But Peter said : Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep part of the price of the field?

4. Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee ? and being sold, was it not in thy

1. To understand this incident aright we must assume that Ananias and Saphira made a solemn vow or promise to God to give all their goods to the Apostles for His service, and to practise perfect self-renunciation along with the rest of the disciples. They were under no obligation to take this vow, but, once made, it could not be broken without the sin of sacrilege ; and we have, in the terrible punishment with which it was visited, a clear sanction given to the Catholic practice of taking vows of poverty. They made their sin graver by adding to it the guilt of lying when they came before the Apostles.
2. By fraud kept part of the price of the field. They had no real faith in the blessings of holy poverty and community of goods. Their avarice made it too trying to make a perfect renunciation.
3. That thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost (*ψεύσασθαι τὸ πνεῦμα*). The verb here takes the accusative, but in v. 4 the dative. We may translate here "deceive" (that is "endeavour to deceive") the Holy Ghost, whose representatives the Apostles were. Note how St. Peter, as then representing the Holy Ghost, received the power to read hearts.
4. Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee ? A Hebrew expression for "whilst it remained, it was entirely in your power" (to renounce or retain the field). This shows that there was no compulsion on the early converts to renounce their property ; but that it was

power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God.

5. And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it.

6. And the young men,

rising up, removed him, and carrying him out, buried him.

7. And it came to pass, about the space of three hours after, his wife also, not knowing what had happened, came in.

8. And Peter said to her: Tell me, woman, whether

voluntary with them, just as it is with those who enter religion at the present time.

Being sold. Even after selling the field there was no obligation to make the offering, for the vow was not made till the money was laid at the Apostles' feet.

Thou hast not lied to men, but to God. Outwardly the money was offered and the promise made to the Apostles, but, being a vow, the offering was really made to God. Hence the lie or deceit practised upon the Apostles was the same as a lie to God Himself.

5. **Ananias gave up the ghost.** St. Peter cannot be charged with the death of Ananias, as his action was confined to a rebuke, and that by no means a severe one. The punishment was inflicted by Almighty God. If we are struck by its severity, we may reflect, with some commentators, that there may have been the grace of repentance offered, so that eternal death did not follow the death of the body; and we may recognize the importance of a very severe lesson for the instruction of the infant Church.

6. **The young men removed him.** Συλέσκειν, which the Vulgate translates *amoverunt*, cannot well bear that meaning. Its proper meaning is "they drew (him) together," or "packed (him) up," and here it denotes the drawing together of the extended limbs and the wrapping up of the body preparatory to carrying it out for burial. Probably they took it to one of the Jewish cemeteries, beyond the valleys of Cedron or Hinnom, by which Jerusalem was surrounded.

7. **About the space of three hours after.** Probably she wondered that he had not returned, and came to find out the reason.

8. **For so much.** Very likely the sum Ananias had brought lay on the table.

you sold the field for so much? And she said: Yea, for so much.

9. And Peter *said* unto her: Why have you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out.

10. Immediately she fell down before his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men, coming in, found her dead, and carried her out, and buried her by her husband.

11. And there came great fear upon the whole church; and upon all that heard these things.

The Apostles work many miracles—vv. 12-16.

12. And by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people; (and they were

all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13. But of the rest no one durst join himself to them:

9. Why have you agreed together? From this we see that there had been collusion. The fraud was a joint action, and on this account she is punished like her husband.

To tempt the Spirit of the Lord. As if to ascertain if the Spirit could detect the fraud.

Are at the door. Returning from the grave, as they might have been, three hours after the husband's death.

11. And there came great fear. This was natural, and the phrase "on all that heard" implies that the fear extended to the priests and rulers.

Upon the Church (ἐκκλησίαν). This is interesting as the first instance we have of the use of the term "Church," except when our Lord used it by anticipation before the Church's establishment (Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17).

12-16. Now follows, as in ii. 41-47 and iv. 32-37, an account of the increase of the Church arising out of the display of Divine power. The first part of verse 12 is evidently continuous with verse 15; the "insomuch" of the latter verse introducing the effect of the "many signs and wonders." Hence "and they were all . . . was more increased" is a parenthesis, inserted to give a picture of the way in which they went boldly day by day to Solomon's Porch, working miracles there and in the streets on the way, none daring to interrupt.

13. But of the rest no one durst join himself to them. "The rest" (οἱ λοιποὶ) being opposed to "they were all," must

but the people magnified them.

14. And the multitude of men and women that believed in the Lord was more increased;)

15. Insomuch that they brought out the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that when Peter came his (shadow) at

the least might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities.

16. And there came also together to Jerusalem a multitude out of the neighbouring cities, bringing sick persons, and such as were troubled with unclean spirits: who were all healed.

The Apostles delivered from prison by an Angel are brought before the council—vv. 17-28.

17. Then the high priest, (heresy of the Sadducees,) rising up, and all that were with him, (which is the

heresy of the Sadducees,) were filled with indignation.

mean the non-Christians who went up to the temple. These saw the daily Christian gatherings, but were afraid to hold intercourse with them. The multitude, however, as distinguished from their leaders, were loud in the praises of the Apostles and their wonderful work.

15. His shadow might overshadow them. Cp. the promise of John xiv. 12, now so strikingly fulfilled. One cannot but unite this passage with xix. 12, and see in them a convincing argument for our belief that God sometimes works miracles through the instrumentality of things associated with our Lord or His saints. Some writers have indeed suggested, in regard to the present passage, that although the people expected the cure to be wrought through the shadow, it is not said that it was so wrought, and not rather wrought by the Apostle's words. But St. Luke evidently means us to understand that the shadow was the means of healing employed.

16. A multitude out of the neighbouring cities. Another stage in the spread of the faith.

Unclean spirits. That is, evil spirits. Although the uncleanness was primarily moral, yet the poor victims were also unclean physically, being covered with filth and with wounds, and without control over their movements.

17. The high priest, rising up. Probably Annas, as he is called high priest in iv. 6. Things were going so far

18. And they laid hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19. But an Angel of the Lord by night, opening the doors of the prison, and leading them out, said :

20. Go, and standing speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21. And they, having heard this, entered early in the morning into the temple, and taught. Now the high priest being arrived, and they that were with him, assembled the council, and all the

ancients of the children of Israel ; and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22. But when the officers came, and having opened the prison, found them not, returning back they told,

23. Saying, The prison, indeed, we found shut with all diligence, and the keepers standing before the doors : but opening it, we found no man within.

24. Now when the magistrate of the temple and the chief priest heard these words, they were in doubt what was become of them.

that at length the enemies of the new faith overcame their fear and determined to interpose again, this time more effectually.

Which is the heresy. That is, "Who formed the heretical party (of the Sadducees)." Notice the *rising up*, one of St. Luke's graphical touches. Abandoning his state of quiescence, he started to his feet.

18. Put them in the common prison. This was their second imprisonment. (Cp. iv. 3.) The adjective "common" seems to imply that the imprisonment was this time more severe

20. Standing speak in the temple. Better, "stationing yourselves" (publicly), where all can see ; so little reason is there for fear.

The words of this life. That is, the teachings and exhortations required to expound and sustain this new Christian mode of life, which leads to life eternal. (Cp. Rom. vi. 4 ; Acts ix. 2—"this way.")

21. Assembled the council, and all the ancients. The *συνέδριον* and *πᾶσα ἡ γερουσία* seem to be equivalent phrases. Perhaps the second is added to indicate how full was the attendance. For the constitution of the Sanhedrim, see notes on iv. 5 and Luke xxii. 66.

24. They were in doubt (*διηπόρουν*). They were in perplexity. *What was become of them.* Better, "as to what it might

25. But a certain man, coming, told them: Behold, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26. Then went the magistrate with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

27. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest spoke to them,

28. Saying: Commanding we commanded you, that you should not teach in this name: and, behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine; and you have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us.

The advice of Gamaliel. The Apostles are scourged and released—vv. 29-42.

29. Peter then, answering, and the apostles, said: We ought to obey God rather than men.

30. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom you put to death, hanging him upon a tree.

come to" (*τί ἂν γένοιτο τούτο*). For the magistrate of the temple, see note on iv. 1.

26. Without violence. The officers for fear of the people made the arrests quietly, the Apostles submitting.

28. Commanding we commanded you. A Hebraism for "we most strictly commanded you."

To bring the blood of this man upon us. Can the Sadducees forget the cry that they raised at Pilate's tribunal: "His blood be upon us and upon our children"? (Matt. xxvii. 25.)

29. Peter answering, and the Apostles. Peter was the mouth-piece of the rest, but they showed their acquiescence in his language by their manner. As "Apostles" is in the plural there must have been others present besides St. John. As they were not yet dispersed, very likely several were there.

We ought to obey God rather than men. He repeats, though in stronger language, what he had said on the previous occasion (iv. 19), and since then God had spoken to him through the Angel (verse 20).

30-32. This bold declaration is likewise a repetition, though more developed, of what he had said to the priests and rulers before (iv. 10-12).

31. This Prince and Saviour God hath exalted with his right hand, to give penitence to Israel, and remission of sins.

32. And we are witnesses of these things, and the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to all those that obey him.

33. When they had heard these things, they were cut to the heart; and they thought to put them to death.

34. But one in the council, rising up, a Pharisee, by name Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, respected by all the people, commanded the men to be put forth a little while.

35. And he said to them: Ye men of Israel, consider with yourselves what you are about to do with these men.

36. For before these days rose up Theodas, affirming

Hanging Him upon a tree. By crucifying Him. He so styles it in allusion to Deut. xxi. 23. This ignominy they had put on their Saviour.

This Prince and Saviour. Better, "This man God hath exalted by His right hand, to be a Leader and Saviour."

To give penitence. That is, to give a place for repentance by His readiness to receive it, and extend to it remission of the sins.

And we are witnesses. Again this important phrase recurs.

And the Holy Ghost. They by their words, the Holy Ghost by the signs and wonders, gave the testimony.

33. Cut to the heart. Their pride was deeply wounded.

34. Gamaliel (Gamali-el, "benefit of God"). He was one of the most famous of the great Jewish teachers. He was the grandson of the still more famous Hillel, and was one of the few who were called not Rabbi, but Rabban, or Great Rabbi. He was also the son of Simeon, who received our Lord into his arms (Luke ii. 25). St. Paul in his younger days had sat at his feet as a disciple (xxii. 3), and there is a tradition that Stephen and Barnabas had done so likewise. Some of the Fathers tell us that he afterwards became a Christian, and the candour and reverence of his counsel on this occasion betoken the dispositions which should have had that issue. The Fathers, however, seem to have nothing but inference to go upon, and the Talmud speaks of his burial some eighteen years later in a way which implies that he was in favour with the Jews to the end.

36. Theodas. Josephus (xx. 5, § 1) tells us of a man of this name who got up an insurrection answering to the description here given, but this insurrection was in

himself to be somebody; with whom joined a number of men, about four hundred: who was slain; and all who believed him were dispersed, and reduced to nothing.

37. After this man rose up ~~Judas the Galilean~~, in the days of the enrolling, and drew away the people after him: he also perished; and all whosoever consented to him were dispersed.

38. And now, therefore, I say to you, Refrain from

these men, and let them alone: for if this design or work be of men, it will fall to nothing:

39. But if it be of God, you are not able to destroy it: lest perhaps you be found to oppose God. And they consented to him.

40. And calling in the apostles, after they had been scourged, they charged them not to speak at all in the name of Jesus; and they dismissed them.

A.D. 44, that is, some eleven or twelve years later than this speech of Gamaliel. He therefore cannot be meant. Theodas, or Thaddeus, however, may be the same person as Judas (cp. Matt. x. 3 with Luke vi. 16), and there was a Judas who rose in insurrection in B.C. 4 (xvii. 6, § 2), when Herod was supposed to have just died. Possibly he is meant, or there may have been some other insurgent named Theodas, of whom no memory has been preserved elsewhere.

37. Judas the Galilean. This is unquestionably the Judas who effected a very considerable rising against the Roman power in A.D. 6. (See Josephus' xviii. 1, § 1.) Josephus calls him in one place a Gaulonite, but in another a Galilean. His followers were known by the name of Zelots. Simon the less was called Zelotes, but he probably would not have been old enough to take part in Judas's rising. He may, however, before he was called by our Lord, have had some sympathy with the party. It is known that a "taxing" or enrolling took place at that time, and was the occasion of a rising under Judas the Galilean. On the relation of this taxing to that of Luke ii. 1, see note on that verse.

38. Refrain from these men. Refrain from punishing these men.

39. Lest perhaps you be found to oppose God. Some such word as "nor try" must be understood before "lest perhaps." *Μήποτε καί*—"lest (in the attempt) you may even be found to oppose God."

41. And they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

42. And every day they ceased not in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

41. Rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus. The Apostles now realized the words of their Divine Master, "(When they shall persecute you), be glad in that day and rejoice" (Luke vi. 23). "The courage and joy exhibited by the Apostles in their sufferings were more wonderful than all their miracles" (St. Chrysostom). The same heroic triumph over suffering is described in glowing words by the Apostle in 2 Cor. xi., xii.

QUESTIONS.

1. Give an account of the death of Ananias and Saphira.
2. To what cause may their death be ascribed?
3. In what did the gravity of their sin consist?
4. What were the special miracles wrought by the Apostles?
5. What class of people furnished most converts to the Church?
6. What action did the high priest and Sadducees take against the Apostles?
7. Describe their miraculous release.
8. Give St. Peter's speech before the council.
9. What was Gamaliel's advice to the council?
10. Who were Theodas, Judas the Galilean, Gamaliel?
11. Explain the terms, "unclean spirit," "to tempt the Spirit of the Lord," "the council and all the ancients," "this Prince," "the days of the enrolling."
12. Comment on the text, "Rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."
13. Explain with reference to the context :—
 - (a) That thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost.
 - (b) Whilst it remained, did it not remain with thee?
 - (c) Thou hast not lied to men, but to God.
 - (d) Of the rest none durst join them.
 - (e) They were in doubt what was become of them.
 - (f) Commanding we commanded you.
 - (g) We ought to obey God rather than men.
 - (h) To give penitence to Israel.
 - (i) Refrain from these men, lest perhaps you may be found to fight against God.

CHAPTER VI.

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SEVEN DEACONS—**vv. 1-7.**

1. And in those days, the number of the disciples increasing, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.
2. Then the twelve, calling together the multitude of the disciples, said: It is not fit that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.
3. Therefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of good reputation, full

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1. In those days. This note of time implies that an interval of some duration separated what is now related from the foregoing.

There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews.

For "Grecians" (*Ἕλληνες*) read "Hellenists" (*Ἑλληνισταί*), "persons affecting Greek ways." These were the Jews of the Western Dispersion (*διασπορά*), or Jews by nationality, who living in the midst of Greeks, or Greek-speaking populations, in the countries of the empire west of Palestine, used the Greek language, and, although preserving their Jewish exclusiveness, had been influenced in many ways by Greek modes of thought and action. They were looked down upon by the Palestinian Jews, or Hebrews, and no doubt this feeling against them had led to the unfairness and the consequent murmuring. Of course the Hebrews and the Hellenists here referred to were the Christian converts from these two classes.

In the daily ministration—i.e., the daily distribution of food and needful things. (Cp. iv. 35.) The "widows" were a class particularly unable to protect themselves.

2. Then the twelve, calling together the multitude. Complaint was evidently made to the Apostles, who felt that if they undertook the management of these distributions themselves they would have to neglect their proper ministry, the preaching of "the word." "Serve tables," that is, occupy themselves in regulating the dispensation of the food, and other similar works.

of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

5. And the discourse pleased all the multitude. And they chose Stephen, a

man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicola^s, a proselyte of Antioch.

6. These they placed in the presence of the apostles: and they, praying, imposed hands upon them.

4. We will give ourselves to prayer. Better, "*the* prayer" (*τῇ προσευχῇ*), "give ourselves continually." Better, we will "continue to devote ourselves to" the public worship of the Church and the preaching of the Word.

5. And they chose Stephen . . . and Philip, &c. Nothing certain is known about these men save what is recorded in the New Testament, but it is observable that all the seven names are Greek, and that Nicolas was a proselyte (see notes on ii. 11, xiii. 43). Were the others, then, all Hellenist Christians? It does not, indeed, seem likely that all were from this section; but we may reasonably infer from the names that its interests were generously represented. Later on a class of heretics arose who were named Nicolaites (Apoc. ii. 6, and cp. 2 Peter ii. 10 and Jude 8). St. Irenæus and others say that Nicolas the deacon afterwards apostatized and was their founder; but this is not certain. St. Irenæus may have been deceived by the similarity of name; and St. Ignatius of Antioch (*ad Trallenses*) speaks of these same heretics as "having taken a false (*i.e.*, misleading) name."

6. They, praying, imposed hands upon them. The prayer and imposition of hands point to the sacramental character of the diaconate. We see, too, from what is further recorded of SS. Stephen and Philip, that they did not merely "serve tables," but also had their part in the ministry of the Word. Later on we have abundant evidence that the deacon was assigned his part as minister to the priest in the Holy Sacrifice, thereby becoming a "server of tables" in another and sublimer way. From this verse we learn that prayer and imposition of hands were accounted the form and matter of the Sacrament of Order; though the Scripture statement is not detailed enough, either here or elsewhere, to define the

7. And the word of the Lord increased; and the number of the disciples was multiplied very much in Jerusalem: a great multitude also of the priests obeyed the faith.

St. Stephen's miracles and preaching—vv. 8-16.

8. Now Stephen, full of the grace and fortitude, did the Libertines, and of the Cyreneans, and of the great wonders and miracles Alexandrians, and of those among the people. that were of Cilicia and

9. But certain men of the Asia, rose up, disputing with synagogue, that is called of Stephen:

precise character of the prayer. That, however, we learn with certainty from the tradition of the Church.

7. **The word of the Lord increased.** Another stage of progress is marked.

A great multitude of the priests obeyed the faith. This is an interesting statement. The priests were very numerous, all the descendants of Aaron being such. It is consoling to know that so many of them were free from the blind obstinacy which, from other Scripture notices, one learns to regard as characteristic of the Jewish priesthood.

8. **Stephen full of grace and fortitude** (*δυναμεις*), of that grace and power which enabled him to touch hearts and work miracles.

9. **The synagogue, that is called of the Libertines.** The synagogues were not merely churches, they were also public schools or colleges. (See Luke iv. 15 note.) As in Rome we have the English, German, and Scotch Colleges, so in Jerusalem, the centre of religion in that day, the different classes and sections of the people built their own synagogues for purposes of meeting and instruction. It is said that there were as many as 480 such synagogues in the city.

Libertines--that is, emancipated Roman slaves, probably descendants of those carried off by Poinpey. They were very numerous at Rome, for Tacitus (*Ann.* ii. 85) speaks of four thousand of them as having been expelled under Claudius. *Cyreneans*, from the district in the north of Africa. (Cp. Mark xv. 21; Acts ii. 10, xiii. 1.) *Alexandrians*.—The Jews formed a very large proportion of the population of Alexandria, where they were engaged in the grain trade, and were

10. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke.

11. Then they suborned men to say, that they had heard him speaking words of blasphemy against Moses and against God.

12. They stirred up, therefore, the people, and the ancients, and the Scribes; and running together, they

took him, and brought him before the council.

13. And they set up false witnesses, who said: This man ceaseth not to speak words against the holy place and the law:

14. For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the traditions which Moses delivered to us.

distinguished for their wealth and culture. *Cilicians*.—To this synagogue Saul of Tarsus must have belonged, and it is not too much to gather that he took a prominent part in the opposition to Stephen, and was St. Luke's informant for the facts recorded in this and the next chapters, and in chapter ix. *Asia*.—The west of Asia Minor. The leading men in synagogues representing such influential classes of Jews must have been able by this combining to form a very powerful opposition to St. Stephen.

11. **Then they suborned men.** They privately instructed (*ὑπέβαλον*) men to bear false witness. The charge made was likely to excite the populace, and was the very charge which they had made against our Lord.

12. **They stirred up the people.** This is the first occasion in which we read of the people being stirred up, but the course was frequently followed afterwards by the enemies of Christianity. (Cp. xiii. 50, xiv. 18, xvii. 8, xix. 23-29, xxi. 27, 28.)

Running together—i.e., suddenly coming upon him (*ἐπιστάντες*).

14. **Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place.** There was a certain colour of truth about this accusation, but we cannot fail to be struck with the considerateness for Jewish feelings with which our Lord, in His providential arrangements, had endeavoured to avoid the difficulty thus brutally objected to the Apostles. The new faith necessarily superseded the old, as the daylight supersedes the twilight. But under God's providence the Christians were taught still to frequent the temple and join in its services. When the "destruction of this place" and the

15. And all they who sat face as it were the face of an in the council, looking Angel. earnestly upon him, saw his

consequent abolition of the tradition delivered by Moses at length came to pass, it was through the action not of the Christians, but of the Jews themselves, who challenged the Roman power.

15. All they who sat in the council . . . saw his face. Clearly we have here the impression made not only generally on those present, but specially on Saul of Tarsus. It was a grace appealing to his conscience which made him feel uneasy at the time—one of the pricks of the goad (ix. 5).

QUESTIONS.

1. What is understood by the terms Hebrews and Grecians?
2. What was the cause of the dissensions between the two parties?
3. What part, respectively, did the Apostles and the multitude take in the appointment of the seven?
4. Give the names of the seven, and say what was their office?
5. What can we infer from the Apostles praying and imposing hands upon the seven?
6. Explain the term synagogue.
7. What were the five mentioned in the text?
8. What steps did his enemies take against him?
9. What were the charges against them, and were there any grounds for making them?
10. Explain with reference to the context :—
 - (a) Serve tables.
 - (b) We will give ourselves to prayer.
 - (c) A great multitude of the priests obeyed the *faita*.
 - (d) Stephen full of grace and fortitude.
 - (e) The spirit and wisdom with which he spoke
 - (f) Then they suborned men.
 - (g) They stirred up the people.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. STEPHEN'S SPEECH. HE EXPOUNDS THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM—vv. 1-8.

1. THEN the high priest brethren, and fathers, give
said: Are these things so? ear. The God of glory
2. And he said: Ye men, appeared to our father
-

1. Are these things so? The assembly had become absorbed, apparently, in gazing on the glorified face of Stephen, and were forgetting the serious charges made against him. The high priest recalls attention to them.

2. And he said: Ye men, brethren, and fathers, give ear. By "brethren" he means all present; by "fathers," the Sanhedrists.

To understand the speech which follows, the purpose running through it must be kept in view. St. Stephen is charged with "speaking words against the holy place (that is, the temple) and the law" (vi. 13). He replies by a compendious history of God's dealings with the chosen race, and their treatment of Him in return; of God's fidelity to His part of the covenant and their persistent infidelity to theirs. By this means he shows his hearers that in rejecting and crucifying Jesus Christ they are doing just what their fathers had been so much blamed for doing; and likewise, though without actually saying it, he implies that the disciples of our Lord were treading in the footsteps of the faithful of old. Thus the speech is of the nature of a retort. "Not I, but you," it contends, "are speaking and acting against Moses and against the God (of Israel), against the holy place and the law." In verses 20-43 he vindicates himself in regard to Moses, in verses 44-50 in regard to the holy place.

Another noticeable thing about this speech is the apparent contradictions between it and the corresponding accounts given in the Old Testament. These must be considered in detail, but in general it may be said that the two accounts can be reconciled sufficiently if we suppose that Stephen supplemented the Old Testament account from inferences and traditional sources.

Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charan : and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I will show thee.

3. And he said to him : 4. Then he went out of Go forth out of thy country the land of the Chaldeans,

The God of Glory appeared to our father Abraham. That is, God appeared to him in His glory, as He did in the Shechinah. (Cp. Exod. xl. 32 ; 3 Kings viii. 10, 11 ; also Exod. iii. 2, and note on Luke i. 35.)

When he was in Mesopotamia—that is, at Ur of the Chaldees. (Cp. Gen. xi. 31.) Mesopotamia ("land between the rivers") was the region between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, extending, however, from a little west of the former river to a little east of the latter. Ur of the Chaldees was far to the south, near the Persian Gulf, and below the southern boundary of what was afterwards called Mesopotamia. But St. Stephen's description is sufficiently near. Ur was, as its name (*the "city"*) implies, the capital of the Chaldean kingdom.

Charan (or Haran) was another city on the Euphrates, but much farther to the north. As the vast desert west of Mesopotamia was impassable, the high road from Ur and Babylon to Chanaan was by Charan, where it was crossed by another high road from Cilicia to Assyria and Media. Hence it was a city of great importance.

3. And he said to him : Go forth out of thy country. In Genesis these words are recorded as having been addressed to him at Charan when he was to leave Charan for Chanaan (xii. 1-5). Of the previous departure from Ur of the Chaldees it is only said that "Thare took Abram his son, and Lot . . . and brought them out of Ur . . . and they came as far as Haran."

But it is likely enough that Abraham received a similar command whilst he was at Ur, and that in consequence he induced his father to depart with all his family. Indeed, Holy Scripture itself in other places implies that there had been this previous call. (Cp. Gen. xv. 7 ; Josue xxiv. 2, 3 ; 2 Esdr. ix. 7 ; Judith v. 7-9.) Philo also says the same (*De Migratione Abrahami*, §32), so that St. Stephen certainly followed the Jewish tradition. And in comparing the call given in this verse with that in Gen. xii. 1, the important variation should be observed. The words "from thy father's house" are here omitted.

4. Then he went out . . . and dwelt in Charan. They had intended even when leaving Ur to go to Chanaan (Gen.

and dwelt in Charan : and from thence, after his father was dead, he removed him into this land, in which you now dwell.

5. And he gave him no inheritance in it, no not the pace of a foot : but he promised to give it him in pos-

session, and to his seed after him, when he had not a son.

6. And God said to him : That his seed should sojourn in a strange country, and that they should bring them under bondage, and treat them ill for four hundred years :

xi. 31), but were perhaps attracted by Charan when they reached it, and, tired of wandering, remained there till the further call came. Even after that it was only Abraham and Lot who obeyed, Nahor remaining behind. God's reason for taking them out of Ur, and presumably out of Charan likewise, was that they might be kept from the idolatry of those regions. (Josue, Esdras, Judith *loca citat.*)

5. And he gave him no inheritance in it . . . but he promised to give it. (Cp. Gen. xv. 1-6, xvii. 8. xxiii. 4) The towns of the promised land were at that time in the possession of the Chanaanite tribes (Gen. xv. 19-21). Abraham wandered about, after the manner of Bedouin shepherds, among the mountains and pastures which were unoccupied ground. We read, indeed, that he bought a piece of ground from Ephron the Hethite (Gen. xxiii. 16-20), but this was for a sepulchre, not for a dwelling place. Besides, the promise was of a possession which included sovereignty, and he did not acquire this by his purchase of the cave at Mambre.

6. His seed should sojourn . . . four hundred years. St. Stephen does not expressly call attention to the excellency of Abraham's faith, but it is this he wishes us to gather from the narrative. In spite of the long-delayed fulfilment, and the apparently adverse intermediate events, Abraham believed firmly (Gen. xv. 6; Rom. iv. 3; Gal. iii. 6).

The time of bondage is, of course, the time in Egypt. The reckoning of 400 years is from Gen. xv. 13, and the round number is more precisely defined as 430 years in Exod. xii. 40. On the other hand, Gal. iii. 17 seems to give 430 years as including not only the time in Egypt, but also the previous time from the call of Abraham, and Josephus in one passage (ii. 15, § 2) says the same. But Gal. iii. 17, which is quoting Exod. xii. 40, may be

7. And the nation which they shall serve I will judge, said the Lord: and after these things they shall go out, and shall serve me in this place.

8. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so he begot Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac Jacob; and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.

Joseph, the saviour of his nation, was sold by his brethren—
vv. 9-16.

9. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: and God was with him.

10. And he delivered him out of his tribulations, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh¹ king

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¹ Pharaoh.

interpreted as meaning merely that from the call of Abraham to the Exodus was at least 430 years. Josephus, too, elsewhere (ii. § 9, 1, and *Wars* v. 9, § 4) says the sojourn in Egypt was 400 years. Moreover, a 400-years' sojourn explains better than a shorter term the great increase of population which took place during it. (Cp. Num. i. 46 with Gen. xvi. 27, Deut. x. 22.)

7. In this place—i.e., Chanaan. This part of the prediction is found not verbally, but equivalently in Gen. xv. 14-16. The phrase itself, "in this place," is identical with that of Exod. iii. 12, and may in St. Stephen's mind have been an unconscious reminiscence of that, for he was not necessarily giving the exact words of the prediction to Abraham.

I will judge. That is, "punish."

8. He gave him the covenant of circumcision as a seal to confirm the promise and a sign that Abraham's children were the race to whom it was to be fulfilled (Rom. iv. 11).

And so he begot Isaac—i.e., as the child of the promise, in whose posterity it should be fulfilled.

Isaac Jacob—i.e., Isaac begot Jacob.

9. The patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph. Here are pointed out the beginnings of the rebellious spirit. (See above note on verse 2.) Joseph was one of the greatest names in Jewish history, and was sold by his brothers to Madianite merchants. The hearers could not fail to see the allusion to Joseph as a type of Christ; for he was sold by his brethren to strangers, and proved to be their

of Egypt; and he appointed him governor over Egypt, and over all his house.

11. Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Chanaan, and great tribulation: and our fathers found no food.

12. But when Jacob had heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent our fathers the first time:

13. And at the second time Joseph was known by his brethren; and his kin-

dred was made known to Pharaoh.

14. And Joseph, sending, called thither Jacob his father, and all his kindred, seventy-five souls.

15. So Jacob went down into Egypt; and he died, and our fathers.

16. And they were translated to Sichem, and were laid in the sepulchre which Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Hemor, the father of Sichem.¹

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¹ Emmor, the father of Sychem.

saviour and deliverer. For Joseph's history, see Genesis xxxvii., xxxix.-l.

14. **Seventy-five souls.** Gen. xlv. 27; Exod. i. 5; and Deut. x. 22, say seventy. But St. Stephen is evidently quoting from the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, which in all these places has seventy-five. This is because that translation, following its lost Hebrew copy, has included the three sons and two grandsons of Ephraim and Manasse in the number (see *ibid.* Gen. xlv. 20).

16. **And they were translated to Sichem.** That is, their bodies were transported there and buried. According to Gen. xlix. 30, Jacob was buried at Mambre near Hebron; but Joseph's remains were carried by the Children of Israel in their wanderings, and finally buried at Sichem (Josue xxiv. 32). St. Stephen, who is here clearly following a Jewish tradition, may have meant that the bones of the other eleven patriarchs were likewise buried there. Sichem is a town on the side of Mount Garizim, about twenty miles north of Jerusalem.

Which Abraham bought from Hemor. Here we have another apparent contradiction between St. Stephen and the Book of Genesis. According to Genesis xxiii. Abraham did buy such a field, but it was "Macpelah (or 'the double cave'), looking towards Mambre" (Gen. xxiii. 16, 17); and he bought it from Ephron the son of

Moses, the deliverer of his people, was rejected and disregarded
—vv. 17-46.

17. And when the time of ~~the promise~~ drew near, which God had promised to Abraham, the people increased and were multiplied in Egypt.
18. Till another king arose in Egypt, who knew not Joseph.
19. This same, dealing deceitfully with our race, afflicted our fathers, that

Seor. On the other hand, Jacob did buy a field at Sichem from the sons of Hemor, the father of Sichem (Gen. xxxiii. 19 and Josue xxiv. 32). But, as has been said, Jacob was buried at Mambre, not in this field at Sichem. To remove this apparent discrepancy, it has been proposed to treat "Abraham" as a textual error for "Jacob." Another proposal is to understand that Abraham had previously purchased the same field at Sichem (cp. Gen. xii. 6), and that Jacob only repurchased it. Neither of these suggestions is quite satisfactory; nor is it satisfactory to suppose that Stephen in his *extempore* speech confused the two names. The question of inspiration may not indeed be raised here, the sacred writer not being responsible for every minute statement made by those whose speeches he records. But it is not likely that those who heard St. Stephen speak, and took down his words, would have passed over unnoticed so striking a variation from a generally accepted account. It is best, therefore, to record the discrepancy, and treat it as insoluble for want of adequate knowledge.

Hemor, the father of Sichem. Lit., Hemor of Sichem. Cp. "Mary (the mother) of James" (Luke xxiv. 10).

17. The time of the promise drew near, that God would give to the seed of Abraham the land of Chanaan for a settled inheritance.
- When.* Better, "in proportion as" (καθώς).
18. Another king arose, who knew not Joseph. The ancient Egyptian records recently deciphered tell us that at one time a dynasty of Shepherd Kings was overthrown, and a new dynasty installed. It has been suggested that by "another king" is meant one of this new dynasty. But the dates seem to disagree.
19. That they should expose their children. By casting all the male children into the river (Exod. i. 22).

they should expose their children, to the end they might not be kept alive.

20. At the same time was Moses born, and he was acceptable to God¹; and he was nourished three months in his father's house.

21. But he being exposed, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

22. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was powerful in his words and in his deeds.

23. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24. And having seen a certain man suffer an injury, he defended him; and strik-

ing the Egyptian, he avenged him who suffered the injury.

25. And he thought that his brethren understood that God by his hand would save them; but they understood it not.

26. And the next day he showed himself to them that were at strife, and would have reconciled them in peace, saying: Men, ye are brethren; why hurt ye one another?

27. But he that did the injury to his neighbour thrust him away, saying: Who hath appointed thee prince and judge over us?

28. Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst yesterday kill the Egyptian?

29. And Moses fled upon this word, and became a stranger in the land of

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¹ Exceeding fair.

20. Moses was acceptable to God (*ἀρετὸς τῷ θεῷ*). That is, "so fair in appearance as to seem fair even in the eyes of God." It is an idiomatic phrase for "very fair."

23. Moses was full forty years old. This fact is not mentioned in Exodus, but was a tradition among the Jews.

To visit his brethren. Hitherto he had lived at the court of Pharaoh, and had not associated with the Hebrews.

25. But they understood it not. The action itself should have shown them that he came as a friend, and was sent by God to deliver them, but they resented his interference. Here again a parallelism is suggested between the perversity which rejected the proffered aid of Moses and the perversity which rejected the Messias.

29. And Moses fled upon this word. Fearing lest he should be arrested for the murder of the Egyptian, which the Hebrews had made known. (Cp. Exod. ii. 15.)

Madian, where he begat two sons.

30. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him, in the desert of mount Sina, an Angel in a flame of fire in a bush.

31. And Moses, seeing it, wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to view it,

the voice of the Lord came to him, saying:

32. I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses, being terrified, durst not behold.

33. And the Lord said to him: Loose thy shoes from

Lana of Madian. The eastern part of the Sinaitic peninsula. Madian was a son of Abraham by Cetura. The "two sons" were Gershom (Exod. ii. 22) and Eliezer (Exod. xviii. 4).

30. **When forty years were expired.** Note the weary length of time during which Moses waited in the desert, and the people who had rejected him waited for their deliverance.

The desert of Mount Sina. In Exodus iii. 2 the mountain is called Horeb, but the names were interchangeable.

In a flame of fire in a bush. "And the bush was not burned" (Exod. iii. 2). This fire in the bush connects itself as a symbol of the Divine presence with the "glory of the Lord like a burning fire" on the same mountain afterwards when the law was given (Exod. xxiv. 16, 17), and with the "pillar of a (bright) cloud" by day, and the "pillar of fire by night" which preceded the Israelites on their journeys (*ibid.* xiii. 21, 22) and settled down on their tabernacle wherever it was fixed (xxxiii. 9, 10), and likewise on the Temple of Solomon after its dedication (3 Kings viii. 10, 11). See note on verse 2 of this chapter.

31. **The voice of the Lord came.** What he saw was an Angel; what he heard was the voice of the Lord. Either the Angel spoke in God's name, or, as some of the Fathers have suggested, it was the Second Person of the Trinity, sent from the Father (for "Angel" means "one sent"), appearing in the Old Testament under a sensible appearance, and in the New Testament in the true nature of man.

32. **I am the God of thy fathers.** That is, the God who entered into a covenant with their fathers, thereby making them and their posterity to be His people, and Himself reciprocally to be their God.

33. **Loose thy shoes from off thy feet.** An act of the highest reverence. In the East, even in our days, no one is

off thy feet; for the place wherein thou standest is holy ground.

34. Seeing I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them: and now come, and I will send thee into Egypt.

35. This Moses whom they refused, saying: Who hath appointed thee prince and judge? him God sent a prince and redeemer, by the hand of the Angel who

appeared to him in the bush.

36. He brought them out, doing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the desert for forty years.

37. This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel: A Prophet will God raise up to you out of your own brethren, as myself; him shall you hear.

38. This is he who was in the church in the wilderness, with the Angel who spoke to him on mount Sina, and with

allowed to enter the shrines without removing the ordinary footgear.

34. I am come down to deliver them. God cannot strictly be said to "come down," because He is everywhere. But, as we conceive of Him as dwelling far above us in heaven, so when He manifests His power and goodness in any special place, He is conceived of as coming down to it. The words of God to Moses end here.

35. This Moses God sent a prince and redeemer. Notice the "this" thrice repeated (verses 35, 37, 38). It is Stephen's solemn acknowledgment of the office and dignity of Moses, whom they had charged him with blaspheming against, and it prepares the way for the contrast of verses 39-43, which set forth their "blasphemy" against this earlier saviour of their race.

37. A Prophet will God raise up to you out of your own brethren. Notice the words "as myself," i.e., as "another Deliverer of the people from bondage," and the injunction of Moses "to hear him," which was just what they were not doing to Jesus. This prophecy had already been cited by St. Peter before the same council; it must have filled them with shame to hear it.

38. Who received the words of life. Lit., the "living oracles." It seems best to understand as intended by the term not merely the Ten Commandments, but all the communications and promises made by God to

our fathers: who received the words of life¹ to give to us;

39. To whom our fathers would not be obedient, but repulsed him, and in their hearts returned back into Egypt,

40. Saying to Aaron: Make us gods to go before us: for as to this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.

41. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42. And God turned, and gave them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets: Did you offer victims and sacrifices to me for forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?

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¹ Lively oracles

Moses on Mount Sina. They were "living oracles" in the sense of sustaining the spiritual life.

With the Angel . . . and with our fathers. As a mediator between him and them. (Cp. Gal. iii. 19.)

39. To whom our fathers would not be obedient . . . and in their hearts returned back to Egypt. They returned in heart only—that is, in their desires for the idolatry of Egypt, with its riotings and licentiousness.

40. Make us gods to go before us. After the fashion of the heathen, whose idols were placed in the van on the march.

We know not what is become of him. It was whilst Moses remained forty days on the mountain with God (Exod. xxiv. 18, xxxii. 1).

41. And rejoiced in the works of their own hands. The "work of their hands" was the golden calf. "Rejoiced in," a euphemism for the sinful indulgence which accompanied their idolatry.

42. And God turned, from showing favour to showing anger. *Gave them up*, by abandoning them to their own evil inclinations, which were impelling them to worship the *hosts of heaven*—i.e., the sun, moon, and stars. (Cp. Deut. xvii. 3.)

In the book of the prophets—i.e., Amos v. 25-27. The writings of the prophets formed one of the three divisions of the Old Testament—the Law, the Prophets, the Writings.

43. And you took unto you the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Rempham, figures which you made to adore them : and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.
44. The tabernacle of the testimony was with our fathers in the desert, as God

Did you offer victims and sacrifices to Me for forty years in the desert? This and the next verse both belong to the quotation from Amos (Septuagint version). Their general sense is to reprove the Israelites for their neglect of God's service for that of idols in the desert and afterwards ; but the present clause seems to imply that no victims and sacrifices were offered up in the desert, which is hard to understand, seeing that the Levitical sacrifices, according to the Pentateuch, were then first instituted. We may distinguish, however, between the journey from Egypt to Cadesbarnea (Num. xiii. 27, xxxii. 8), which lasted a year and a quarter, and the subsequent wanderings for forty years to which the people were condemned for their unbelief (*ibid.* xiv. 34). There are reasons for thinking that they were neglectful of God, and therefore of the prescribed sacrifices, during the latter period, as they certainly were of circumcision (Josue v. 5, 6) and of the Sabbath (Ezech. xx. 10-26). We have also indications of their proneness to idolatry during that period. (Cp. Deut. iv. 3 ; Ps. cv. 28 ; Osee ix. 10.)

13. The tabernacle of Moloch. The tabernacle was a shrine of the god carried at the head of the army of his worshippers, just as the ark was carried before the armies of God. Moloch was the sun-god, worshipped by the Ammonites and others. It was customary for parents to sacrifice their children to him by casting them into a furnace burning within his image (Lev. xx. 2, 3 ; Jer. vii. 31).

The star of your god Rempham—i.e., apparently, "the star representing your god." "Rempham" is from the Septuagint. The Hebrew has Kiyoun, which may also be read Kaiwan, the name of a god which occurs in Assyrian tablets.

I will carry you beyond Babylon. Amos has "Damascus" in place of "Babylon," but the sense is the same. The reference to the Babylonian captivity shows that the idolatry charged against the people was not that of Egypt only.

44. The Tabernacle of the Testimony was with our fathers. Here St. Stephen comes to the second charge made against him—of blaspheming against the temple. His reply is by calling attention to the true value of the

ordained for them, speaking to Moses that he should make it according to the form which he had seen : 45. Which also our fathers, receiving, brought in with Jesus into the possession of the gentiles, whom God ex-

temple, and to the false notions which the Jews had, even from the days of old, entertained in regard to it, as though they had done a service to God in building Him a temple so glorious—instead of acknowledging His goodness in deigning to hear them in it, and seeking to render Him thus the worship of a genuine piety.

The Tabernacle of the Testimony. The "Tabernacle" was a tent, and was called the "Tabernacle of Testimony" (Exod. xxvii. 21) because it contained the "ark of the testimony" (Exod. xl. 5, xxvi. 33), or the ark which testified to the covenant made between God and Israel. In the ark were the tables of the law (Deut. x. 5), the pot of manna (Exod. xvi. 34), and Aaron's rod that budded (Num. xvii. 10). (Cp. Heb. ix. 4.) Some scholars, however, would translate "tabernacle of meeting" (*moed*), i.e., the tabernacle where God met His people.

As God ordained. The Tabernacle was God's gift; He having ordered that it should be made, and furnished the pattern, and caused it to be the Tabernacle of Testimony. For the account of the Tabernacle, see Exod. xxxv.-xl.

45. Which also our fathers, receiving. "Receiving in their turn" (*διαδεχόμενοι*) from Moses.

Jesus—i.e., Josue. Jesus ("salvation of the Lord") is the Greek form of the name.

Into the possession (*ἐν τῇ κατασχέσει*). Better "in"—that is, "during." They brought it into Chanaan whilst that land was still in the hands of the Gentiles, God assisting them, and driving out before them the Gentiles, the measure of whose iniquity was now filled up (Gen. xv. 16).

Until the days of David. With the accession of David a new period began. For 400 years the ark of the covenant had had no fixed position; but, even after the wanderings were over, was moved successively to Galgal (Josue iv. 20), Silo (*ibid.* xviii. 1), and, after its recovery from the Philistines, to Gabaa (1 Kings vii. 1, 2). In each place a tabernacle seems to have been erected for it. (Cp. 2 Paralip i. 3.) David at length brought it to Jerusalem when that stronghold, the last to resist the Israelite attack, had been wrested from the Jebusites (2 Kings vi. 12-18).

pelled from the face of our fathers, until the days of David; the sight of God, and desired that he might find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

46. Who found grace in

He corrects their exaggerated views of the holiness of the Temple—vv. 47-53.

47. But Solomon built him a house.

48. But the Most High dwelleth not in houses made by hands, as the prophet saith :

49. Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What house will you build for me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of my rest?

46. Desired that he might find a tabernacle (*ibid.* vii. 2-16).

He calls it modestly a tabernacle (σκήνωμα), but means a house; unless, indeed, the reference is not to the temple he desired to build, but to the fresh tabernacle he actually set up in Jerusalem (2 Kings vi. 17; 2 Paralip i. 4).

47. Solomon built him a house. (3 Kings v., vi., viii.; 1 Paralip ii.-vii.)

48. The Most High dwelleth not in houses made by hands. Verses 44-47 have declared the true purpose of God's house. Verses 48-50 guard against the mistaken ideas about it. As the words are from Isaias lxvi. 1-5, who is the "prophet" meant, and are likewise substantially the same with those of Solomon in his prayer at the Dedication (3 Kings viii. 27-30), we must presume that St. Stephen was intending to deduce from them the same lesson as Solomon and Isaias, and would have expressed it had he not suddenly broken off in the middle. Hence we must go to those passages for the meaning, which comes to this. The temple, splendid as it might seem, was no adequate dwelling-place for the "Most High," who fills all space. If He had accepted it at the hands of His people, it was for their advantage, and not for His; and let them offer Him there the worship which was acceptable in His eyes: not sacrifices which were mere external formalities, and the offering of hearts filled with malice, but sacrifices which were the offering of hearts obedient to God's teaching and abounding in good works.

49. Heaven is My throne. Heaven, being always pictured to

50. Hath not my hand made all these things?

51. With a stiff neck and uncircumcised heart and ears you always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* you also. †

52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain those who foretold of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been *now* the betrayers and murderers:

himself by man as above, is represented as God's throne or the place where He dwells; the earth beneath, to which also His being reaches, as His footstool. This is only a way of saying that He is everywhere, and since He is everywhere, no one special place can, strictly speaking, be called His resting-place.

50. Hath not My hand made. "How then can it be for *My* advantage to receive a temple from you?"

51. Here it seems likely that the speaker was interrupted by the growing indignation of his audience. Hence he puts the conclusion he wished to draw in the form of a burning denunciation of Israel's obstinate resistance to grace. Perhaps, too, the mention of the prophet (in verse 48) and the recollection of his words brought forcibly before the holy deacon the entire course of resistance to God's prophets (cp. Matt. xxiii. 34-37, and note on Luke xi. 47-51), culminating in the rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah whom they had foretold.

With a stiff neck. So that they could not bend the neck in obedience. (Cp. Jer. xvii. 10.)

Uncircumcised heart. Rather, "Uncircumcised in heart and ears." A veil or covering of perversity binding fast their hearts and ears excluded the entrance of grace. Probably no epithet more galling than "uncircumcised" could have been applied to them. It was precisely the same that they had so often hurled at the despised Gentile. Both these names had, however, been applied to them by the prophets of old (Exod. xxii. 9; Deut. ix. 9; 2 Paralip xxx. 8; Lev. xxvi. 41; Jer. vi. 10).

52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? (Matt. xxiii. 34-37; Luke xi. 47-51.)

The Just One. (Cp. note on iii. 4.)

The betrayers. A most severe epithet, yet only too true, for they had faithlessly handed over one of their own nation to their enemies, the Romans, to suffer their cruel death of crucifixion. Notice the "*now*." Of old the fathers had slain the prophets. Now the children had slain the foretold of the prophets.

53. Who have received of Angels, and have not the law by the disposition kept it.

St. Stephen upbraids his hearers ; he is stoned to death—

vv. 54-59.

54. Now, hearing these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth at him.

55. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus

53. Who have received the law by the disposition of Angels. He means, "through the ministrations of Angels." (Cp. Gal. iii. 19.) *Ἐἰς διαταγὰς ἀγγέλων.* Lit., "to the ministrations." The receiving is conceived of as a going-out to meet the Angels who were bringing the law to the people. (Cp., for a similar construction, Rom. iv. 20.) The Jews, as Gal. iii. 19 and also Heb. ii. 2 show, understood that Angels were the intermediaries in the giving of the law. (Cp. note on verse 31.)

54. Hearing these things, they were cut to the heart. Naturally, considering the gravity of the indictment against them.

SUMMARY OF ST. STEPHEN'S SPEECH.

St. Stephen's speech is remarkable for its comprehensive survey of Jewish history from the standpoint of the inner causes from the working of which it sprang. (See Appendix IV.)

1st Point.—The call of Abraham, the faith with which he obeyed it, and the covenant of circumcision which followed are narrated because on these the privileges of the race were founded (verses 2-8).

2nd Point.—God gave Joseph to be a saviour to his brethren. They ill-treated him, and yet, in spite of their ill-treatment, God used him as an instrument for their preservation (verses 9-16).

3rd Point.—God gave Moses to be their deliverer from Egyptian bondage. Yet they murmured against him, and disobeyed him, and, in spite of the gift of the law, relapsed so frequently into idolatry (verses 17-43).

4th Point.—God allowed them to build Him first a tabernacle and afterwards a temple, and, nevertheless, they perverted its worship and rendered it offensive instead of pleasing in God's eyes (verses 44-50).

5th Point.—Thus in rejecting Jesus, whom God had raised up, they were only treading in the footsteps of their stiff-necked fathers, and filling up the measure of their infidelity to the covenant and to the teaching of Moses and the prophets (verses 51-54).

55. He being full of the Holy Ghost. A fresh infusion of the graces of the Holy Spirit so carried him away from earth that he was taken up to the "third heaven" (cp. 2 Cor.

standing at the right hand of God. And he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.

56. And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord rushed in violently upon him.

57. And having cast him out of the city, they stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul.

58. And they stoned Stephen, invoking, and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

xii. 2), and, like Abraham and Moses of old, saw the glory of God, and Jesus *standing at the right hand of God*. "Standing" as if He had risen to welcome His first martyr.

56. **They rushed in violently.** The bystanders saw nothing, and therefore professed to be horror-struck at the blasphemy. There was no judicial sentence in this case, nor apparently had they the power to inflict it. (Cp. John xviii. 31, and note on Luke xxiii. 1.) What happened, therefore, was an act of illegal as well as unrighteous violence.

57. **The witnesses.** By the law (Deut. xvii. 6, 7), two at least were required, and it was their duty to cast the first stone *Laid down their garments (ἱμάτια)*. Their outer garments, so as to leave the arms free. By holding the cloaks Saul encouraged and abetted the murder. Compare his own touching confession: "And when the blood of Stephen, thy witness, was shed, I stood by and consented, and kept the garments of them who killed him" (xxii. 20).

Out of the city. So that it might not be polluted by the blood-shedding.

A young man. If he was a member of the Sanhedrim he must have been thirty, but *νεανίας* would be his description up to about that age.

58. **And they stoned Stephen, invoking, and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.** Invoking (*i.e.*, our Lord). Notice the repetition of "they stoned him," which is not to record again the fact, but to set more in contrast his act and theirs. Notice, too, how closely his dying words resemble those of His Master. He had clearly meditated on these deeply, and was so able, being himself the first martyr, to set an example to all who came after him.

59. And kneeling down, when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord. And he cried out with a loud voice, saying : Lord, lay not Saul was consenting to his this sin to their charge. And death.

59. And kneeling down. In the fervour of his prayer he even kneels down, and pours all his dying strength into the petition for his slayers. Stephen by his prayers could not stay the commission of the sin, but he asks God to overlook it in His mercy, by granting his enemies such light and grace that they might quickly repent. It is piously believed that this prayer of St. Stephen was heard in the conversion of his great opponent, Saul of Tarsus. Such was the impression made upon the early Church by St. Stephen's death that the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons in the second century went to their execution with these words of St. Stephen on their lips.

He fell asleep in the Lord. The Christians entertained so vivid an idea of the Resurrection that they regarded death as nothing more than closing one's eyes in this world to open them again in a happy eternity. Hence the name for a burial ground, "cemetery"—i.e., "sleeping-place."

Saul was consenting to his death. The penitent Saul still continues, through his evangelist, to express his deep sorrow and shame for the past deed of guilt.

QUESTIONS.

1. Give a summary of St. Stephen's speech.
2. Explain his reference to Abraham's call to leave his home.
3. How is Joseph a type of Christ?
4. How does Stephen treat the history of Moses?
5. What was the charge against him with reference to the Holy Place, how does he defend himself?
6. How do you explain the abrupt ending of the speech?
7. Relate his heavenly vision.
8. Comment on the legality of his death, and give the details.
9. Write out his prayer. Quote any similar prayers from the Gospel.
10. How far did Saul share in Stephen's death?
11. Comment on the difficulties in these passages, (1) "The God of glory appeared to . . . Abraham in . . . Mesopotamia"; (2) "The sepulchre which Abraham bought . . . of the sons of Hemor."
12. Describe the positions of Mesopotamia, Charan, Chanaan, the land of Madian.
13. Who were Hemor, Jesus?
14. Explain the terms "Moloch," "Rempham," "tabernacle of the testimony," "uncircumcised heart," "the Just One," "he who was in the Church in the wilderness."

15. Paraphrase verses 44 and 45.
16. Explain with reference to the context :—
(a) His seed should sojourn in a strange land for 400 years
(b) He gave them the covenant of circumcision.
(c) Another king who knew not Joseph.
(d) Moses was acceptable to God.
(e) In a flame of fire in a bush.
(f) I am come down to deliver them.
(g) Rejoiced in the works of their hands.
(h) God turned and gave them up to serve the hosts of heaven.
(i) You took unto you the tabernacle of Moloch.
(j) Heaven is My throne.
(k) Ye received the law by the disposition of Angels.
(l) The witnesses laid down their garments.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCH IS PERSECUTED—**v. 1-4.**

- 1.** AND at that time there was raised a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all dispersed through the countries of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.
- 2.** And devout men took care of Stephen's funeral, and made great mourning over him.
- 3.** But Saul ravaged the church, entering into houses, and, haling away men and women, committed them to prison.
- 4.** They, therefore, who were dispersed, went about preaching the word of God.

1. At that time—i.e., At that very time, since it was the result of the attack on St. Stephen.

They were all dispersed. Judea and Samaria are mentioned, Judea for its proximity to Jerusalem, Samaria on account of what follows in the chapter. But the dispersion was not confined to these districts. (Cp. xi. 20.)

Except the Apostles. They remained behind, doubtless to strengthen the Christians there and continue their preaching. There is a tradition found in the early Fathers that our Lord had ordered the Apostles to remain in Jerusalem for twelve years, to preach to the Jews before going elsewhere.

2. Made great mourning over him. Verse 2 is inserted by St. Luke after instead of before verse 1, to continue his contrast between St. Stephen and Saul. The mourning was not only for so saintly and eloquent a minister, but to honour the first Christian martyr. Hence the Church in all ages has exhibited the highest honours to those who have laid down their lives for their faith, so that in course of time it became the law that the holy sacrifice could only be offered over the relics of martyrs.

3. But Saul ravaged. How touching this acknowledgment of past sin, so thorough and so free from all attempts to extenuate the guilt.

Philip converts the Samaritans—vv. 5-8.

5. And Philip, going down to the city of Samaria, preached Christ to them.

6. And the people were attentive to those things which were said by Philip, with one accord hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, went out of many who were possessed with them :

8. And many taken with the palsy, and that were lame, were healed.

Simon Magus—vv. 9-13.

9. And there was great joy in that city. But a certain man named Simon, who before had been a magician in the city, seducing the people of Samaria, giving out that he was some great one :

10. To whom all hearkened, from the least to the greatest, saying : This man

5. **Philip.** Not the Apostle, but the deacon (vi. 5).

The city of Samaria. Better, "A city of Samaria." There is no article in the Greek (cp. John iv. 5), which makes us ask whether here too the city was Sychar, where our Lord had discerned fields ripe for the harvest.

6. **The people were attentive** (προσείχον). They listened with ready ears.

9. **Simon, who had been a magician, before St. Philip's arrival.** Originally the word *magi* designated an Eastern caste who studied the stars. Matt. ii. 1-12 shows that there were among them men of piety and uprightness. But the name was extended to denote all who practised sorcery, and so it is used here and in Acts xiii. 6. This Simon was a character who figured largely in the Apostolic age. St. Irenæus calls him the "author of all heresies." There are some spurious legends about him which describe several encounters between him and St. Peter.

Giving out that he was some great one. That he himself was (ἐαυτὸν). He drew attention to himself; the Apostles and their disciples drew attention away from themselves to our Lord.

10. **The power of God, which is called great.** His disciples were instructed to call him "the great power of God;" as though he were in some way an incarnation of the Divinity. "The great power"—i.e., the highest of all Divine powers.

is the power of God, which is called great.

11. And they were attentive to him, because for a long time he had bewitched them with his sorceries.

12. But when they had believed Philip preaching the kingdom of God, in the name

of Jesus Christ, men and women were baptized.

13. Then Simon himself believed also: and being baptized, he adhered to Philip. Seeing also wonders and miracles done, he was struck with amazement.

Peter and John confirm the Samaritans and rebuke Simon—

vv. 14-25.

14. Now when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John:

15. Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16. For he was not yet come upon any one of them;

11. They were attentive to him. The same word as above (verse 6).

12. But when they had believed Philip, they gave up Simon and were baptized.

In the name of Jesus Christ men and women were baptized. (See note on ii. 38.)

13. Then Simon himself believed. This seems inconsistent with what follows, but either the belief was feigned, or, since the words are very plain and direct, he did believe, but afterwards fell away under the recurring temptations of his own previous life, when he saw the miracles wrought.

He was struck with amazement. He understood all the arts of jugglery and sorcery, but he was now confronted with miracles that were quite beyond his understanding.

14. The Apostles sent Peter and John. This does not necessarily mean that the College of the Apostles was superior to its head, St. Peter, but that after deliberation they considered it advisable that Peter and John should go to Samaria. The word "sent" is not used juridically, but popularly. They discussed the matter among themselves and agreed that it was advisable for Peter and John to go down and deal with so important a crisis.

16. For he was not yet come upon any one of them. This shows that the Apostles only could communicate the higher

but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18. And when Simon saw that by the imposition of the hands of the apostles the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19. Saying: Give me also this power, that on whomso-

ever I shall lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said to him:

20. May thy money perish with thee, because thou hast esteemed the gift of God to be purchased with money.

21. Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22. Do penance, therefore, from this thy wicked-

gifts of the Spirit, though the deacons were allowed to baptize.

Only baptized. That is, not yet confirmed.

17. **They received the Holy Ghost.** In the Sacrament of Confirmation. That Sacrament was instituted to (1) confirm and perfect the graces of baptism; (2) to impart the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, especially fortitude; (3) to enable the Christian to endure, with patience, the trials of his faith; (4) also in the early Church it seems to have had an accessory virtue of imparting the power of working miracles and of speaking with "tongues."

18. **Simon offered them money.** Seeing the miraculous power displayed by some of those who had thus received the Holy Ghost, he coveted the same power for himself, and, unspiritual as he was, hoped to obtain it from the Apostles in return for money. From his name, on account of this sin, the term "simony" has been derived and applied to denote buying or selling spiritual things for money, or its equivalents.

20. **May thy money perish with thee.** The horror excited in St. Peter's mind by Simon's suggestion forces him into this vehement language. The sin deserved such a punishment, for it is a fearful insult to God's spiritual gifts to suppose that anything temporal can be their equivalent in value.

21. **Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter.** Lit., "in this word," a Hebraism. (Cp. Luke ii. 15.) The matter was the power of the Holy Ghost he had proposed to purchase.

Not right. Lit., "not straight" (εὐθεῖα).

22. **Do penance**—internal as well as external.

ness, and pray to God, that perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee :

23. For I see thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity.

24. Then Simon, answering, said : Pray you to the Lord for me, that none of

these things which you have said may come upon me.

25. And they, indeed, having testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many countries of the Samaritans.

Philip baptizes the Eunuch of Ethiopia—vv. 26-40.

26. And an Angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying : Arise, and go toward the

south, to the way that goeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza : this is desert.

That perhaps this thought may be forgiven thee. Better, "if perchance" (εἰ ἄρα). The suggestion is that the hope of forgiveness is small, seeing how unsuitable were his dispositions.

23. Thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity. Phrases taken from Deut. xxix. 18 ; Isa. lviii. 6. Bitter hostility to the faith of Christ was in his heart, and iniquity held him in its fetters. This is what made the hope of forgiveness so doubtful. Ἐνταῦθα εἰς = "to have fallen into, and to be in," as often in the New Testament.

24. Pray you to the Lord for me. His words were fair, but hypocritical—for otherwise St. Peter would have treated him differently.

25. To many countries of the Samaritans. Better, "villages" (κώμας). They were on the way back to Jerusalem.

26. Gaza. One of the most ancient towns of the world, on the edge of the desert between Egypt and Palestine, and one of the chief cities of the Philistines. Travellers to and from Egypt supplied themselves with provisions here. It had stood a five months' siege from Alexander the Great, and was at this time in a flourishing condition.

This is desert—that is, "this road was." There were two possible roads to Gaza from Samaria ; one, more direct, through Ramleh, the other through Hebron ; the latter led through the desert, and was a way that he was to take, as it would bring him across the Ethiopian.

27. And rising up, he went. And, behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch, of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge over all her treasures, had come to Jerusalem to adore :

28. And he was returning, sitting on his chariot, and reading Isaias the prophet.

29. And the Spirit said to Philip: Go near, and join thyself to that chariot.

30. And Philip, running thither, heard him reading the prophet Isaias; and he

said: Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest?

31. And he said: How can I, unless some one show me? And he desired Philip to come up and sit with him.

32. And the place of the Scripture which he read was this: As a sheep he was led to the slaughter: and like a lamb without a voice before his shearers, so opened he not his mouth.

33. In humility his judgment was taken away. Who shall declare his generation;

27. **Ethiopia.** That district to the south of Egypt now known as Nubia and Abyssinia.

A eunuch, or chamberlain; who was either a Jew, or, at least, a proselyte of justice (cp. note on Acts xiii. 43), as he had "come to Jerusalem to adore."

Candace seems to have been the name of a dynasty, like Pharaoh. Some authorities pronounce it Candace.

30. **That thou understandest what thou readest.** In the Greek, notice the play on the words *γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις*.

31. **How can I, unless some one show me?** The eunuch, although placed in a high and influential position, was not one of those who found the Bible so easy that his own private judgment was its sufficient interpreter. He welcomed the interpretation of the Church as communicated to him through St. Philip, and thereby set us an example of the mode in which we too should be students of Holy Scripture.

32. **The place of Scripture was this.** The passage is in Isaias liii., and the eunuch was reading it in the Septuagint version, which differs in some respects from the current Hebrew text.

33. **In humility his judgment was taken away** (*loc. cit.*, verse 7). This has been variously interpreted, but the best sense is, "Because he so humbled himself, the just judgment which was his due was denied him."

for his life shall be taken away from the earth?

34. And the eunuch, answering Philip, said: I beseech thee, of whom doth the prophet speak this? of himself, or of some other?

35. And Philip, opening his mouth, and beginning at that Scripture, preached to him Jesus.

36. And as they went on the way, they came to a certain water: and the eunuch saith: See, here is water; what hindereth me from being baptized?

37. And Philip said: If

thou believest with thy whole heart, thou mayest. And he, answering, said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40. But Philip was found

Who shall declare his generation? This phrase also has received more than one exposition. "Who can understand the men of his time?" seems that which best suits the context, and the Greek words bear it.

For his life shall be taken away. This was so wonderful about the men of his time, that they should slay one so meek and innocent.

35. **Preached to him Jesus.** That is, he explained that *Isaias* spoke the words not of himself, but of Jesus. (Cp. *1 Peter ii. 22-24*, which similarly interprets *Isaias liii.*)

36. **What hindereth me from being baptized?** Philip must have expounded to him the nature of baptism, since he shows himself so eager to receive the sacrament.

37. **I believe that Jesus is the Son of God.** This was not the only article of belief enjoined on the eunuch. In believing that Jesus is the Son of God, he accepted all His teaching and was ready to obey all His commands, in fact, to be received into the Church of Jesus Christ.

39. **The Spirit of the Lord took away Philip** in order to show the eunuch that Philip's teaching was from heaven.

40. **Philip was found in Azotus.** Some forty miles from Gaza, about half way to Joppe. The city was formerly termed *Ashdod*, and, like Gaza, was one of the strong cities of the Philistines. It was celebrated for its sieges, one of which lasted twenty-nine years.

in Azotus ; and, passing gospel to all the cities, till through, he preached the he came to Cesarea.

Passing through, he preached the Gospel. That is, among the inhabitants of the coast district.

Cesarea. On the sea coast of Palestine, a little south of Mount Carmel, and about sixty miles from Jerusalem. It rose into celebrity under Herod the Great, who constructed an enormous breakwater and harbour, and built palaces and an amphitheatre. In honour of Augustus he named it Cesarea Sebaste. It became the official residence of the Roman governor and the military headquarters. Here St. Philip lived (Acts xxi. 8), here Cornelius the centurion was baptized (x. 24), here Herod Agrippa was struck down (xii. 19), and here St. Paul underwent two years' confinement (xxiii. 33, xxiv. 27).

QUESTIONS.

1. Give an account of the persecution of the Church after the death of St. Stephen.
2. Where did St. Philip preach, and with what effect?
3. Who was Simon Magus?
4. Why were the Apostles sent to Samaria?
5. In what terms did St. Peter denounce the proposals of Simon Magus?
6. Relate the story of the conversion of the eunuch of Ethiopia.
7. Give some account of the city of Samaria, Gaza, Ethiopia, Azotus, Cesarea.
8. Who were Philip, Simon Magus, Candace, the eunuch?
9. Explain the terms, "they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," "in humility his judgment was taken away." "who shall declare his generation?" From what part of the Scriptures is the latter text quoted?
10. Explain how belief in Christ as the Son of God was considered enough preparation to receive baptism.
11. What are the effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation? And who are the ministers?
12. What is simony, and whence is the name derived?
13. Explain with reference to the context :—
 - (a) All were dispersed except the Apostles.
 - (b) They made great mourning over Stephen.
 - (c) Simon himself believed.
 - (d) The Apostles sent Peter and John.
 - (e) Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter.
 - (f) Thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity
 - (g) How can I, unless some one show me?

CHAPTER IX.

SAUL IS STRUCK DOWN ON HIS WAY TO DAMASCUS—vv. 1-8.

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|---|--|
| <p>1. AND Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples</p> | <p>of the Lord, went to the high priest,
2. And asked of him letters</p> |
|---|--|
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1. Saul. Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, was born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but in his early youth was taken to Jerusalem, where he studied at the feet of Gamaliel. At the time of his conversion he may have been about thirty years of age. He belonged to the strictest sect of the Pharisees, and was distinguished beyond all his companions for his zeal for the Pharisaic traditions. He was by birth a Roman citizen, but of his family we know nothing. He was destined to play a most important part in the early days of the Church, and his deeds and writings occupy a considerable space in the New Testament record. He was martyred in Rome with St. Peter, A.D. 67.

Yet breathing out threatenings. Breathing them like a deadly poison out of his infuriated breast.

Yet. He was still, after the interval taken up by the events of the last chapter, continuing the persecutions, of which viii. 3 records the beginning.

Went to the high priest. (Annas, cp. note on iv. 6.) It was a spontaneous act on Saul's part.

2. Damascus. One of the most ancient cities in the world. It was a flourishing town in the time of Abraham, nearly 2,000 years before Christ. It is situated on the edge of a desert, but was abundantly watered by the rivers Abana and Pharpar, which rendered its gardens and lands singularly productive. At this time it was in the hands of Aretas (2 Cor. xi. 32), who had probably wrested it from Herod Antipas in the war in which Aretas was successful against that monarch. (Cp. note on Luke iii. 14.)

Letters to the synagogues. That is, "credential letters." The Jews at this time were very numerous in Damascus,

to Damascus to the synagogues; that if he found any men and women of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3. And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew near to Damascus; and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him:

4. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?

5. And he said: Who art thou, Lord? And he: I am Jesus, whom thou dost persecute: it is hard for thee to kick against the goad.¹

A. V.

¹ Pricks.

and the rulers of their synagogues had powers to imprison and scourge offenders of their own race.

Of this way. That is, "of this way of living." The term "way" was applied to denote a sect or party. (Cp. xviii. 26, xxii. 4.)

3. *And as he went on his journey.* We have three accounts of St. Paul's conversion—here, where it is given for the sake of Christian readers; in chapter xxii., where it is addressed to Jews; and in chapter xxvi., where it is addressed to Agrippa and Festus. They should be compared together; compare also Gal. i. 13-24.

Suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. Although it was midday (xxii. 6, xxvi. 13), such was the brightness that it overpowered that of the sun. It was the selfsame "glory of God" which had been seen by Abraham and Moses (see notes on vii. 2, 30).

4. *And falling on the ground.* He was probably on foot, but if he rode at all it would be on a camel, and not on a horse as painters generally represent.

Why dost thou persecute Me? Whatever was done against the least of His members was an attack upon Christ Himself. His love for His disciples causes Him to suffer in their sufferings. Christ here shows the union between the head and members of His mystical body, the Church (Matt. xxv. 40).

5. *It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.* These words are found in xxvi. 14, from which they seem to have been interpolated here; for the best MSS. omit them in this place. The goad was a long staff with an iron point, used by drovers to urge on their oxen. As it was hard, and useless for the poor beast to kick against his

6. And he, trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? told thee what thou must do. Now the men who went in company with him

7. And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice, but seeing no one.

driver armed with such a weapon, so Saul would find it hard to resist the movements of grace that were urging him to conversion. Here the question arises whether Saul had been in good faith in his persecutions of the Christians. His own words appear to be proof that he was, for he says he was pardoned because he "did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 13). His character, too, impresses one as having been throughout loyal and straightforward. What happened we may gather was this: The contact with the followers of Christ, which his persecutions had required, especially his presence at the trial of Stephen, had made an impression upon him, which, although he resisted it at first, probably attributing what he witnessed to some unworthy cause, and was driven by it to persecute with an increased animus, nevertheless strengthened itself within his breast the more he thought of it. It was, in fact, God's grace thus gradually spurring him onwards to the truth, and was the goad against which he had been kicking in vain.

In his speech to Agrippa the Apostle gives further additions to our Lord's words, which the Evangelist here omits (xxvi. 16-18).

6. *He, trembling and astonished.* As man must always be when he finds himself helpless in the presence of supernatural power.

Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? With characteristic single-mindedness and generosity he surrenders at once, and offers himself unreservedly to the service of his newly-found Master.

7. *There it shall be told thee what thou must do.* From xxvi. 16-18 it might seem that our Lord Himself there and then told him in general what he was to do. But St. Paul, before Agrippa, may have been speaking compendiously; or else we may understand that in Damascus he was to receive more precise instructions.

The men in company stood amazed. According to xxvi. 14, they too had fallen to the ground, but the companions may easily have recovered from their terror more rapidly than Saul, and have stood around him in amazement.

8. And Saul arose from the ground; and his eyes being open, he saw nothing: but they, leading him by the hand, brought him into Damascus.

He is baptized, and preaches Christ—vv. 9-22.

9. And he was there three days without sight, and he neither ate nor drank.

10. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, by name Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision: Ananias. And he said: Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

11. And the Lord *said* to him: Arise, and go into the street that is called Strait¹; and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth.

12. (And he saw a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight.)

A. V.

¹ Strait.

Hearing a voice, but seeing no one. In his account to the Jews (xxii. 9) St. Paul seems to contradict this—"Saw indeed the light, but they heard not the voice." We may, however, infer that they heard the words, but not so as to catch their articulate meaning, just as they saw the light but not the form of the speaker.

8. **He saw nothing.** When he first saw the light, its brightness caused him to shut his eyes and hide them against the ground. When he rose and opened them, he found he was blind. This may have been the natural effect of the light, but it was at least permitted partly as a chastisement, partly to turn his thoughts inwardly upon himself and what he had experienced.

10. **Ananias.** It is clear that this man was a devout believer, but how and where he received the faith must always be a matter for conjecture. He is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology as having laid down his life for the faith.

11. **Behold, he prayeth.** There could not have been a more certain indication that the fierce persecutor had become a humble servant of Christ. Nothing is known of the Judas here mentioned. In some copies the reading is, "While he prayed he saw a man named Ananias."

12. It is best to take this verse as a parenthesis. The words are

13. But Ananias answered: Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how great evils he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem:

14. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy name.

15. And the Lord said to him: Go; for this man is a vessel of election to me, to carry my name before the

gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

16. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for the sake of my name.

17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house, and laying his hands on him, he said: Saul, brother, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, he who appeared to thee in the way as thou

those of the narrator, and tell of a vision which Saul had at the very same time, and which prepared him to recognize Ananias when at length he came to him.

13. *Ananias answered.* Some think that Ananias was afraid to approach a persecutor who might lay violent hands upon him. But it is more reasonable to understand him as merely expressing his very natural surprise that a thing so incredible should have happened.

Thy saints. A favourite designation of the members of the Church among the early Christians. (Cp. Rom. i. 7; 2 Cor. i. 1, &c.) It does not imply that they were all men of saintly virtues, but that by their membership of the Church they were consecrated and holy persons.

15. *This man is a vessel of election to me.* That is, a chosen vessel. "Vessel" is a Hebraism for any kind of instrument. Saul, then, was Christ's chosen instrument for carrying "His name before the gentiles and kings of the children of Israel." Here gentiles are put in the first place, as Paul's chief work. The term kings may refer to Agrippa, Felix, and Festus, and perhaps Nero.

16. *I will show him* (ὡπιδείξω). "I will teach him." (See also Luke vi. 47, xii. 5.) How well the disciple drank in the lessons of his Divine Master the whole of his life testifies. The heroic spirit with which he encountered every form of suffering is told on almost every page of his writings. (Cp. particularly 2 Cor. xii. 10; Col. i. 24.)

17. *Ananias laying hands on him.* Not with a view to conferring a sacrament, but to curing him of his blindness, according to the words of Our Lord, "they shall

camest, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales; and he received his sight: and rising up, he was baptized.

19. And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples who were at Damascus for some days.

20. And immediately he preached Jesus in the syna-

gogues, that he is the Son of God.

21. And all were astonished that heard him, and said: Is not this he who in Jerusalem attacked violently those who called upon that name; and came hither for this purpose, that he might lead them bound to the chief priests?

22 But Saul increased much more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, affirming that this is the Christ.

lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover" (Mark xvi. 18).

The Lord Jesus. The title by which our Blessed Lord was named by the Apostles after His Ascension into heaven.

Saul, brother. He had now recovered from his distrust, and welcomed Saul as a member of the Church.

18. **There fell from his eyes as it were scales.** St. Luke here uses the exact medical terms to show that the blindness was not imaginary, or a result of nervous shock, but a real physical defect in the sight.

He was baptized. The fact is mentioned to show the absolute necessity of this sacrament. For although Saul was directly called by Christ, directly instructed by Christ, and probably received from Christ the fulness of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, he was not released from receiving baptism at the hands of Ananias.

20. **Immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.** That was the main point. Was this man named Jesus, the Son of God and the long-expected Messias? (Cp. Matt. xxvi. 63, xxvii. 40.)

22. **Increased much more in strength.** "Spoke ever with increasing force."

And confounded the Jews by the power of his arguments.

Affirming that this is the Christ (συμβιβάζων). Comparing and quoting passages from the Old Testament proving that Jesus was the Messias. (See Part II., Appendix I., for the character of St. Paul's discourses to the Jews.)

He is forced to fly from Damascus, and goes to Jerusalem—
vv. 23-30.

23. And when many days were passed, the Jews consulted together to kill him : disciples : and all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

24. But their laying in wait was made known to Saul. And they guarded the gates also day and night, that they might kill him.

25. But the disciples, taking him by night, conveyed him away by the wall, letting him down in a basket.

26. And when he was come into Jerusalem, he offered to join himself to the

27. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and related to them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had acted confidently in the name of Jesus.

28. And he was with them coming in and going out in Jerusalem, and acting con-

23. When many days were passed. This phrase can be understood of a considerable period of time, and St. Paul tells us (Gal. i. 17) that after his conversion he did not go to Jerusalem, but retired into Arabia, and then returned to Damascus. The "many days" of the text may well cover this sojourn in Arabia, which in Gal. i. 17 is said to have lasted "three years," a phrase which does not necessarily mean more than a part of three years. In the Epistle cited he tells us, indeed, that straightway on his conversion he went to Arabia, but this expression need not compel us to understand that he went before preaching in the synagogues. This preaching was not probably Apostolic preaching, but merely his testimony to what had happened to himself. It was not till after his return from Arabia that he first came forward in the character of a Divinely-appointed Apostle.

The Jews consulted to kill him. (Cp. 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.)

26. They were all afraid of him. After the long interval doubts may have arisen, and to those who had had experience of Saul the persecutor, the story of his conversion may well have seemed suspicious.

27. Barnabas took him. Barnabas may have known him previously, but, even without this circumstance, he may have made a suitable intermediary.

28. He was with them coming in and going out. A Hebraism

29. He spoke also to the gentiles, and disputed with the Grecians; but they sought to kill him.

30. Which when the brethren had known, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him away to Tarsus.

Peter heals Eneas—vv. 31-35.

31. And the church indeed had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and was increased, walking in the fear of the Lord, and was filled with the consolation of the Holy Ghost.

32. And it came to pass that Peter, as he passed

for familiar intercourse. From xxii. 18 we learn that his stay in Jerusalem was short; from Gal. i. 18, that it was probably limited to fifteen days.

Acting confidently in the name of the Lord. He was full of boldness and fortitude in preaching the name of Jesus.

29. He spoke also to the Gentiles. This phrase is omitted in the best MSS. Nor is it likely that Saul preached to the Gentiles before the conversion of Cornelius.

He disputed with the Grecians—i.e., the Hellenist Jews (Ἑλληνιστάς). (See note on vi. 1). These were the class of Jews to whom Paul, by his Cilician birth, was best suited to preach. Probably, like Stephen, he spoke in the Cilician synagogue (vi. 9), trying to undo his own unfortunate work of a few years previously.

30. They brought him to Cesarea, in order that he might thence take ship for Tarsus. As to his movements for the next three years, until Barnabas went to Tarsus to fetch him (xi. 25), we have only his own summary statement (Gal. i. 21) that he was "in Syria and Cilicia."

31. The Church indeed had peace. Better, "The Church therefore (οὖν) had peace." This period of peace seems attributed to the conversion of Saul, or perhaps to his removal from Jerusalem, where he had become a special source of irritation.

32. Peter, as he passed through, visiting all the brethren. A new section of the history here opens. St. Peter takes advantage of the peace to visit the different communities.

Lydda. The Lod of the Old Testament, about eighteen miles north-west of Jerusalem, in the fertile plain of

through, visiting all, came to the saints who dwelt at Lydda.

33. And he found there a certain man named Eneas, lying on his bed for eight years, who was ill of the palsy.

34. And Peter said to

him: Eneas, the Lord Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And immediately he arose.

35. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him; and they were converted to the Lord.

Peter raises Tabitha to life—vv. 36-43.

36. And in Joppe¹ there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which, being interpreted, is called Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she performed.

37. And it came to pass in those days that she was

sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38. And Lydda being near to Joppe, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him with this request: Delay not to come even to us.

A. V.

¹Joppa.

Sharon, or Saron. This vale of Sharon, or Saron, is a very striking feature in the Holy Land, which physically is characterized by four parallel districts stretching north and south: (1) The sea coast; (2) The level plain of Sharon; (3) The chain of mountains forming a kind of backbone to the country; (4) The deep valley drained by the river Jordan.

35. All that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him. This and the following miracles are mentioned as having marked epochs in the progress of the faith. (See below, verse 42.)

36. In Joppe. Now Jaffa, about twenty miles to the north of Lydda. It is practically the port of Jerusalem, a port very deficient on account of the bad anchorage, but the best which that coast offers.

Dorcas means "gazelle," but on account of this woman's charity it is now applied to any woman who gives herself up to works of mercy. Unless her alms were bestowed on those who had not yet believed, we have here a proof that community of goods had not extended to Joppe.

39. And Peter, rising up, came with them. And when he was arrived, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood round about him weeping, and showing him the coats and garments which Dorcas had made them.

40. And having put them all out, Peter, kneeling down, prayed; and turning to the body, he said: Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes;

and having seen Peter, sat up.

41. And giving her his hand, he raised her up; and when he had called the saints and the widows, he presented her alive.

42. And it was made known throughout all Joppe; and many believed in the Lord.

43. And it came to pass, that he stayed many days in Joppe with one Simon a tanner.

39. All the widows. The poor widows for whom she had worked (cp. vi. 1) coats (*χιτῶνας*) and garments (*ἱμάτια*), i.e., the tunics fitting close to the skin, and the loose outer garments.

40. Having put them all out, for the greater quietude conducive to earnest prayer. St. Peter had seen our Lord do the same, (Luke ix. 25).

41, 42. The saints. (See note on verse 32.) The result was a considerable accession to the faith in this fresh region of the Holy Land.

43. With one Simon a tanner. The commentators note that the occupation of a tanner, involving as it did contact with the skins of dead animals, was deemed by the Jews an unclean occupation. Hence they deduce that Peter must already have cast off to some extent the rigour of his attachment to Pharisaic uses. We must, indeed, bear in mind x. 14, which seems to imply the contrary, but the Apostle may well have been rigid in observing the more highly sanctioned usages of his race, whilst liberated by our Lord's teaching from the servitude of the Pharisaic *minutiae*.

QUESTIONS.

1. Recount the conversion of Saul as it is given in this chapter.
2. Compare it with the two other versions that he himself gave.
3. Under what circumstances was he baptized?
4. Distinguish his two appearances at Damascus.
5. Why and how did he escape from the city?

6. What was his reception at Jerusalem?
7. Why was he compelled to fly?
8. Relate the history of the healing of Eneas and the raising of Dorcas.
9. Give some account of Damascus, Tarsus, Lydda, Joppe.
10. Who were Saul, Ananias, Barnabas, Eneas, Tabitha?
11. Explain the terms, "this way," "a vessel of election," "coming in and going out," "the saints."
12. Show how Christ insists upon the necessity of baptism.
13. What powers had the synagogues at this time?
14. How do you account for Ananias's hesitation, at first, to go to Saul?
15. Is there anything remarkable in St. Peter's choosing the house of a tanner for his abode?
16. Explain with reference to the context :—
 - (a) Breathing out threatenings.
 - (b) Why dost thou persecute Me?
 - (c) It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.
 - (d) Ananias laying hands upon him,
 - (e) Affirming that this is the Christ.
 - (f) Dealing confidently in the name of the Lord.
 - (g) The Church had peace.

CHAPTER X.

CORNELIUS IS INSTRUCTED BY AN ANGEL TO SEND FOR PETER— VV. 1-8.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Now there was a certain man in Cesarea, named Cornelius, a centurion of the band which is called the Italian, | 2. A religious man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. |
|--|---|

1. Cornelius, a centurion of the band which is called Italian.

Recent writers have brought to light the fact that Augustus Cæsar instituted a picked band or cohort of men for special services in the provinces. Their duties were to keep the Emperor informed of the state of the outlying districts, to organize means of communication between Rome and the dependencies, but, above all, to see that the Imperial city was plentifully and regularly supplied with corn. This cohort is again mentioned in chap. xxvii., where it is engaged in conveying prisoners for their trial to the capital. The name Cornelius suggests that he may have belonged to the *gens Cornelia*. If so, it is interesting to notice that the first Gentile convert should have belonged to one of the 'most distinguished Roman families. The course of the narrative shows that he was not only not a Jew, but not even a proselyte. There were presumably many proselytes who had been already converted, but the distinctive feature in this conversion is that it was of one who was in no sense an Israelite. Although not a Jew, he had an attraction for the Jewish religion, so far as it involved the recognition and worship of God and inculcated works of piety. Thus his dispositions were excellent.

2. He feared God with all his house. The influence and example of this officer was powerful enough to make his military dependants walk in his steps. (Cp. verse 7.)

Gave much alms to the people. That is, to the Jews who styled themselves *the people*—i.e., the chosen people. He thus resembled that other centurion (Luke vii. 5).

Prayed to God always, and apparently at the regular hours of Jewish prayer. (Cp. verse 30 and note on iii. 1.)

3. He saw in a vision manifestly, about the ninth hour of day, an Angel of God coming in to him, and saying to him: Cornelius.

4. And he, beholding him, being seized with fear, said: What is it, Lord? And he said to him: Thy prayers and thy alms have ascended for a memorial in the sight of God.

5. And now send men to Joppe, and call hither one Simon, who is surnamed Peter:

6. He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea-side: he shall tell thee what thou must do.

7. And when the Angel who spoke to him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a soldier that feared the Lord, of those who were under him:

8. To whom when he had related all, he sent them to Joppe.

Peter's vision of the sheet let down from heaven—vv. 9-16.

9. And on the next day, whilst they were going on their journey, and drawing near to the city, Peter went up to the higher parts of the house to pray, about the sixth hour.

10. And, being hungry, he

was desirous to taste *something*. And as they were preparing, there came upon him an ecstasy of mind;

11. And he saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by the four

3. He saw, while at prayer (cp. verse 30), manifestly. In a way that could leave no manner of doubt.

4. Thy prayers and thy alms have ascended (like incense in the sight of God—Apoc. viii. 4) for a memorial. Whereby God had been continually reminded of his spiritual need.

5. Send to Joppe. About forty miles south of Cesarea.

9. Peter went to the higher parts of the house. The God who by a vision had sent Cornelius to St. Peter, by another vision prepared Peter to receive him in the person of his messengers. The flat roofs in the East become the usual resort for prayer or serious affairs.

Sixth hour—i.e., midday.

10. There came upon him an ecstasy. The words imply that he was by supernatural force carried out of himself, so as to be unconscious to all happening around him.

corners from heaven to the earth,

12. In which were all manner of four-footed beasts, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air.

13. And there came a voice to him: Arise, Peter; kill, and eat.

14. But Peter said: Far be it from me, Lord; for I

have never eaten any common and unclean thing.

15. And the voice *spoke* to him again the second time: That which God hath purified, do not thou call common.

16. And this was done thrice: and presently the vessel was taken up again into heaven.

Peter sets out to visit Cornelius—vv. 17-23.

17. Now, whilst Peter was doubting within himself what the vision which he had seen should mean, behold,

the men who were sent by Cornelius, inquiring for Simon's house, stood at the gate.

12. All manner of four-footed beasts. The Jews observed a great distinction between clean and unclean animals, the rules for distinguishing which are given in Leviticus xi. But this sheet contained representatives of the whole animal creation, unclean as well as clean.

14. I have never eaten any common and unclean thing. The force of inherited prejudice was strong in him. Besides, our Lord when on earth had observed the Jewish distinctions between clean and common or unclean meats, although He had clearly laid down the principle that "not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man" (Matt. xv. 11).

15. That which God hath purified. The fact that the sheet and the animals were raised up and let down from heaven showed that they were purified in the eyes of God: a Jew could raise no objection to meats coming direct from heaven.

16. This was done thrice. To make a deep impression upon the Apostle's mind.

17. Whilst Peter was doubting what the vision should mean. It meant (see verse 28) that (1) the distinction between men, between Jews and Gentiles to the exclusion of the latter from the privileges of the covenant, was now withdrawn, and hence (2) the distinction of meats, which had been introduced to preserve the distinctness of the

18. And when they had called, they asked if Simon, who is surnamed Peter, lodged there?

19. And as Peter was thinking on the vision, the Spirit said to him: Behold, three men seek thee.

20. Arise, therefore, go down, and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.

21. Then Peter, going down to the men, said: Behold, I am he whom you seek: what of the cause for which you are come?

22. And they said, Cornelius, a centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and that hath good testimony from all the nation of the Jews, received an answer of a holy Angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee.

23. Then bringing them in, he lodged them. And the day following he arose, and went with them: and some of the brethren from Joppe accompanied him.

Peter enters the house of Cornelius—vv. 24-33.

24. And the day after he entered into Cesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and special friends.

Jewish race, was withdrawn likewise; (3) that this being so, the time had arrived for admitting Gentiles freely, and without submitting to circumcision or other Jewish observances, into the Christian Church. Peter, however, had not as yet clearly understood that all this was involved in the vision, and was therefore pondering it over when the explanation came to him through the news of the corresponding vision to Cornelius.

19. **Behold, three men seek thee.** Unless the Spirit had thus spoken, he might still have been in doubt about the truth of their story.

23. **Some of the brethren from Joppe accompanied him.** Their ocular testimony (verse 45) was of great use when Peter defended his action afterwards (cp. xi. 12), whence we also learn that the number of these brethren was six.

24. **His kinsmen and special friends.** We see from this that there was quite a little party of the same mind as Cornelius, and destined to be the firstfruits of the Gentiles.

25. And it came to pass when Peter was come in, Cornelius met him, and falling down at his feet, worshipped.

26. But Peter raised him up, saying: Rise, I myself also am a man.

27. And talking with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

28. And he said to them: You know how abominable a

thing it is for a man that is a Jew to keep company or to come to one of another nation; but God hath showed to me not to call any man common or unclean.

29. Wherefore, making no doubt, I came when I was sent for: I ask, therefore, for what cause you have sent for me?

30. And Cornelius said: Four days ago, until this

25. Cornelius, falling down at his feet, worshipped him. The spectacle of a Roman official bending in worship before a Jew must have impressed St. Peter and his companions very deeply.

26. Rise, I myself also am a man. As it is not likely that Cornelius took Peter for a god, and was offering him Divine worship, or more than the profound reverence due to God's representative, it seems best to see in these words the expression of the Apostle's humility.

28. You know how abominable a thing it is—better, "how forbidden it is" (*ἀθέμιτον*)—to come to, *i.e.*, "into the house of." There was no Divine law to this effect, but the Jews had very rigid notions as to the unlawfulness of intercourse with Gentiles. They could engage in business transactions with them, but they could not enter their houses without contracting legal impurity, nor could they eat with them. (Cp. John xviii. 28; Gal. ii. 12.) We may compare, too, the words of the centurion at Capharnaum: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof"; although there it was reverence for our Lord's person, and not merely an acknowledgment of the Jewish usage.

But God hath showed. Gr., *καί*—*i.e.*, "and yet."

29. Making no doubt. Lit., "in a way not to be gainsaid" (*ἀναντιρρήτως*). He went in the feeling that no reasonable objection could be taken to his action.

I ask, therefore, for what cause. St. Peter had been told that he was to go and speak with Cornelius, and he probably perceived what Cornelius wished to obtain from him. Still, it was natural that he should ask to hear the latter's desire and confession from his own lips.

hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and, behold, a man stood before me in white apparel, and said :

31. Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thy alms are remembered in the sight of God.

32. Send, therefore, to Joppe, and call hither Simon,

who is surnamed Peter ; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea-side.

33. Immediately, therefore, I sent to thee ; and thou hast done well in coming. Now, therefore, all we are present in thy sight, to hear all things whatsoever are commanded thee by the Lord.

Peter's instruction to Cornelius and his household—vv. 34-43.

34. Then Peter, opening his mouth, said : In truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons :

35. But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh justice, is acceptable to him.

36. God sent the word to the children of Israel,

31. **Thy prayer is heard.** He had been praying for an instructor who should tell him the way of salvation. (Cp. xi. 14.)

34. **Then Peter, opening his mouth.** A phrase to indicate an address of some length and importance. (Cp. viii. 35 ; Matt. v. 2.)

God is no respecter of persons. God, the Maker of all men, does not make any difference between man and man on mere external grounds, such as those separating Jew from Gentile (cp. Rom. ii. 11), but receives all God-fearing and right-living persons in whatsoever nation they may be found. This was a tremendous admission for a Jew to make.

36. **God sent the word.** Gr., "the word which God sent." The construction of this sentence, which is very difficult, reads just such as we might have expected from a man like St. Peter, labouring under a strong emotion. "He is the Lord of all" is a parenthesis, and in the Greek τὸν λόγον, τὸ ρῆμα, and Ἰησοῦν τὸν ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ are all accusatives in apposition, governed by "you know." We may, then, render it thus : "You know the word which God, announcing the glad tidings of peace, sent to the children of Israel through Jesus Christ (He is the Lord of all), that word which hath been published through all Judea, beginning from Galilee after John's baptism, you know I mean Jesus of Nazareth," &c.

preaching peace through Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all.)

37. You know the word which hath been published through all Judea: for it began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached,

38. Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with him.

39. And we are witnesses of all things which he did in

the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they killed, hanging him upon a tree.

40. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest,

41. Not to all the people, but to witnesses preordained of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose again from the dead.

42. And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who hath been appointed by God to be the judge of the living and of the dead.

37. **You know.** Cornelius could only know this, except in a general way, by report.

38. **How God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost.** The oil of anointing was the symbol of power and office infused into the heart by God. Hence the outpouring of the Holy Ghost is appropriately called an anointing. The reference is to Luke iv. 18. The Sacred Humanity was "anointed" with the Holy Ghost in the first moment of the Incarnation. The visible descent of the Holy Ghost at His baptism was therefore to manifest, not to confer, this gift.

Doing good—i.e., doing works of mercy. (Cp. Mark vii. 37.)
41. **Not to all the people.** From this we learn that there was a Divine purpose in our Lord's refusing to manifest Himself to all the people after the Resurrection. Had He appeared in the midst of them in His power the evidence of His resurrection would have been too crushing, and no room would have been left for faith.

But to witnesses preordained—i.e., chosen beforehand. As it was God's will that the doctrine of the Resurrection should be preached all over the world, His purpose would be best served by carefully choosing as His witnesses to this great event, men whose whole life and character would be a guarantee of the truth they affirmed.

43. To him all the prophets give testimony, that remission of sins who believe through his name all receive in him.

The Holy Ghost comes down upon Cornelius and his household, and they are baptized—vv. 44-48.

44. While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them that were hearing the word. the circumcision, who had come with* Peter, were astonished because the grace of the Holy Ghost was also poured out upon the
45. And the faithful of gentiles.

43. **To Him all the prophets give testimony.** He had in mind the testimonies which our Lord had expounded to him (Luke xxiv. 44), specimens of which he had given in his speeches to the Jews.

That through His name. Transpose the sentence thus : "That all who believe in him receive remission of sins through his name."

We have here a summary of the instructions that St. Peter gave to Cornelius and his household preparatory to baptism. He gives them an outline of the life of Christ (verses 37, 38) ; His passion and death (verse 39) ; His resurrection (verse 40) ; the evidences for these great truths (verses 40, 41) ; His appointment to judge the living and the dead (verse 42), and to forgive sins to those who believe in His word (verse 43).

44. **The Holy Ghost fell upon them,** in the same manner as upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. "As upon us," St. Peter says (xi. 15). Tongues of fire appeared over their heads, and they spoke with tongues.
45. **The faithful of the circumcision.** That is, the six Jewish Christians that accompanied St. Peter. The coming of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentiles must have been a great surprise to them, running as it did so counter to their deeply ingrained exclusiveness ; but it is clear that they yielded without reserve to the evidence of the miracle, thus fulfilling the purpose for which it was granted ; for this purpose must have been, in a matter of so much consequence, to make it irresistibly clear that the wall of partition was broken down between Jew and Gentile, and that now "in Christ Jesus" nothing profited save newness of life (Gal. iii. 15).

46. For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God.

47. Then Peter answered: Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received

the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they entreated him to stay with them some days.

46. They heard them speaking with tongues, magnifying God. The "tongues," which were real languages, not unmeaning sounds, were used to "magnify God"—that is, to sing His praises, not to make known the faith. (See note on ii. 4.)

47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized? This may have been an appeal to the six Jewish brethren; but as there are no grounds for supposing that they were against the proposal, it is better to understand the question as rhetorical.

48. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See note on ii. 38.)

QUESTIONS.

1. Give the character of Cornelius, and say what religious knowledge he had.

2. Explain the duties of the "Italian band."

3. Give an account of the vision of the Angel to Cornelius.

4. What was St. Peter's vision, and what was the explanation?

5. What is the distinction between "common" and "clean" meats?

6. What was our Lord's practice and teaching with regard to distinction of meats?

7. Relate the history of the reception given by Cornelius to St. Peter.

8. Recite St. Peter's discourse.

9. What remarkable miracle followed this discourse?

10. Explain the terms, "the people," "the sixth hour," "for a memorial," "opening his mouth," "respector of persons," "the faithful of the circumcision," "they spoke with tongues."

11. Give a summary of St. Peter's speech.

12. Explain with reference to the context:—

(a) He prayed to God always.

(b) That which God hath purified do not thou call common.

(c) Whilst he was doubting what this vision should mean.

(d) Rise, I myself also am a man.

(e) How abominable a thing it is for a Jew to come to one of another nation.

(f) Who worketh justice.

(g) God gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people.

(h) But to witnesses preordained of God.

CHAPTER XI.

PETER BEING BLAMED FOR ADMITTING GENTILES INTO THE CHURCH, MAKES HIS DEFENCE, WHICH IS ACCEPTED—VV. 1-18.

1. AND the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the gentiles also had received the word of God. 2. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they who were of the circumcision disputed against him,

2. They who were of the circumcision disputed against him.

"They of the circumcision" is a term describing the Jewish Christians generally; but it is taken here, and elsewhere in the New Testament, to designate that element or party among the Jewish Christians who were disposed to insist on the obligation of circumcision and Jewish observances. It is necessary to understand correctly the attitude of these Jewish Christians towards the Gentile converts. The Jews had all along understood that the Gentiles would be gathered in by the Messiah, for their prophetic books are full of the announcement. (Isa. xi. 10, xlii. 1, lx. ; Amos ix. 1 ; cp Acts xv. 16.) They were also themselves continually receiving "proselytes" (Matt. xxiii. 15) ; and although these proselytes were deemed to be of an inferior order to the born Jews, they were admitted to associate with the Jews in their worship and in their meals. But they were all—*i.e.*, the full-blown proselytes, or proselytes of justice (cp. note on xiii. 43)—compelled to undergo certain purifications and circumcision, and to observe the law and all its ceremonies. These Jewish Christians, then, had understood our Lord's prediction that the Gospel should be diffused throughout the world, in the sense that the Gentiles should be invited to enter in under the recognized conditions of "Jewish proselytism." The new principle, on the other hand, which had just been established at Cesarea, was that the Gentiles were on the same level of privilege as the Jews, and did not need to submit themselves to circumcision and other Jewish rites, but would be received at once by the gate of baptism to all the rights and blessings of the Christian Church.

3. Saying: Why didst thou go in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them?

4. But Peter began and declared to them the *matter* in order, saying:

5. I was in the city of Joppe praying; and I saw in an ecstasy of mind a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6. Into which looking I considered, and saw four-footed creatures of the earth and beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air:

7. And I heard also a voice saying to me: Arise, Peter; kill, and eat.

8. And I said: By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth.

9. And the voice answered the second time from heaven: What God hath made clean call not thou common.

10. And this was done three times: and all were taken up again into heaven.

11. And, behold, immediately there were three men come to the house wherein I was, sent to me from Cesarea.

12. And the Spirit said to me that I should go with them, nothing doubting. And these six brethren went with me also, and we entered into the man's house.

13. And he told us how he had seen an Angel in his house, standing and saying to him: Send to Joppe, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter;

14. Who shall speak to thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15. And when I had begun to speak, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, as upon us also in the beginning.

16. And I remembered the word of the Lord, as he said: John indeed baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

4. But Peter began. St. Peter satisfies their demand with great gentleness and modesty, having himself so recently felt as they were still feeling.

15. When I had begun to speak. That is, "whilst I was speaking." (Cp. note on i. 1.)

As upon us also in the beginning of our ministry (on the day of Pentecost)

17. If then God gave to them the same grace as to us also who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could oppose God?

18. When they had heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying: God then hath also to the gentiles given repentance unto life.

The Church at Antioch—vv. 19-26.

19. And they indeed who had been dispersed by the persecution that arose on occasion of Stephen went about as far as Phenice, and

Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none but to the Jews only.

20. But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene,

17. Who was I, that I could oppose God? By not following up the intimations contained in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and refusing to baptize the Gentile applicants.

18. They held their peace. They seem to have been all men of good will, only anxious to know what justification Peter had. We must distinguish them, therefore, from the more perverse persons who raised the same difficulties later on. (Cp. chap. xv.)

19. They who had been dispersed. He returns to the dispersion of viii. 1-4, to show how the faith was planted in still more distant places, and how St. Paul began his apostolate.

Phenice, or *Phœnicia*, the narrow strip of coast land to the north of Palestine. The inhabitants were the great navigators and merchants of ancient times, and amassed great wealth. Their two chief towns were Tyre and Sidon.

Antioch, on the River Orontes, was the capital of Syria, and, being the Gate of the East, ranked after Rome and Alexandria as the third in importance of the cities of the Empire. It was the residence of the Proconsul of Syria, under whom the Procurator of Judea was placed. The Christian faith took firm root in the city, which, in consequence, became the basis of St. Paul's subsequent missionary operations.

20. Spoke also to the Greeks. Here some MSS. have *Ἕλληνας* (Greeks), others *Ἑλληνισαῖς* (Hellenist Jews). (See note on vi. 1.) *Ἕλληνας* is the best, for there would have been nothing striking in the conversion of Hellenist Jews.

who, when they had entered into Antioch, spoke also to the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believing was converted to the Lord.

22. And the report of these things came to the ears of the Church that was at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas as far as Antioch:

23. Who when he was come, and had seen the

grace of God, rejoiced, and exhorted them all with purpose of heart to continue in the Lord.

24. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith. And a great multitude was added to the Lord.

25. And Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul: whom when he had found he brought to Antioch.

26. And they conversed there in the church a whole

21. A great number believing was converted. A great number, having accepted the faith, was converted.

The hand of the Lord was there to protect them. (Cp. Luke i. 66.)

22. They sent Barnabas as far as Antioch. As he was a Cyprian and a Hellenist Jew he would be more in touch with the Antiochenes. A Hebrew Jew would have raised difficulties about mixing with the Gentile converts.

23. With purpose of heart to continue in the Lord. Better, "In purpose of heart." He exhorted them to persevere in their purpose in regard to the Lord's service.

24. For he was a good man. That is, "excellent." St. Luke means that his goodness caused him to rejoice in the conversion of the Gentiles, instead of taking umbrage at it as a usurpation of the privileges of Israel. St. Luke is said to have been a native of Antioch; he may therefore have been present to witness these things.

25. Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul. After the dangerous opposition he had encountered in Jerusalem, Saul probably judged it more prudent to remain in retirement until he was called forth by the Church. Barnabas, who knew something of the many gifts of nature and of grace with which the new convert was endowed, felt that his presence at Antioch would be of the greatest service. And the event showed that the feeling was not mistaken.

26. The disciples were first named Christians. The name is of Latin formation, like "Herodiani, Pompeiani," &c. Hence it must have originally been applied to the party by Latin-

year : and they taught a great multitude, so that at Antioch the disciples were first named Christians.

Agabus prophesies a famine—vv. 27-30.

27. And in these days there came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. which came to pass under Claudius.

28. And one of them, named Agabus, rising up, signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over the whole world, 29. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, resolved to send relief to the brethren who dwelt in Judea :

speaking Gentiles, perhaps in derision, for the Antiochenes were fond of inventing nicknames. The Jews called our Lord's followers Nazarenes, and seeing that "Christ" was their own name for the expected Messiah, they would certainly not have called them Christians. The Christians called themselves "the brethren," "disciples," or "the saints." (See note on xxvi. 28.)

27. There came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. The term "prophets" in the New Testament has often a very wide meaning. In general it means those who are moved by Divine inspiration to declare the will of God. The subject matter of their message may be either the truths of faith which they can expound with clearness and unction, or the course of future events which God may desire to make known beforehand. (See note on xiii. 1.) Agabus was exercising the second of these functions.

28. Signified by the Spirit—i.e., "inspired by the Spirit, foretold." Which came to pass under Claudius. The reign of the Emperor Claudius lasted from A.D. 41-54. The whole of his reign was memorable for the famines which desolated the Empire. Judea was especially affected by a famine which occurred A.D. 45, and we read that the people were relieved in a great measure by the kindness of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, a kingdom of Mesopotamia, who sent them quantities of corn and figs.

29. To send relief to the brethren who dwelt in Judea. Probably Agabus gave his prophecy for the purpose of inviting the relief which would be so soon needed ; and the new converts would have sent it the more readily, as, so far, Jerusalem was the Mother Church to which they owed all.

30. Which also they did, the hands of Barnabas and sending *it* to the ancients by Saul.

30. Sending it to the ancients (*πρεσβυτέρους*). Our English version follows strictly the Vulgate in translating this word sometimes by "ancients," sometimes by "priests." The latter is the best, as the term was technical, and meant not men of a certain age, but those of a certain order. Our term "priest" is etymologically derived from *πρεσβύτερος*, which, along with *ἐπίσκοπος*, was used at the first to denote without distinction either the highest or the second order of the Christian priesthood. (See notes on xiv. 22, xx. 28.)

By the hands of Barnabas and Saul. The incident about Agabus seems to have been mentioned because it led to this mission of Saul to Jerusalem, and thus contributed to shape the course of his apostolic career.

QUESTIONS.

1. How did the Jewish converts view the admission of Gentiles into the Church?
2. How did St. Peter justify his action in receiving Cornelius?
3. What additional particulars on this point did he give in his speech at Jerusalem?
4. What was the effect of St. Peter's speech?
5. Give an account of the spread of the Gospel after Stephen's persecution.
6. What was the origin of the name Christian? Does it occur elsewhere in "The Acts"?
7. Show how the prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled.*
8. What action did the faithful at Antioch take in the famine?
9. Describe Antioch and Tarsus, Phenice.
10. Explain the terms, "they of the circumcision," "the Greeks," "prophets," "ancients," "to continue in the Lord."
11. Why was Barnabas sent to Antioch?
12. What was his object in bringing Saul from Tarsus?
13. Explain with reference to the context:—
 - (a) As upon us also in the beginning.
 - (b) Who was I, that I could oppose God?
 - (c) They held their peace.
 - (d) For he was a good man.
 - (e) Agabus signified by the Spirit.

CHAPTER XII.

HEROD'S PERSECUTION—vv. 1-5.

1. AND at the same time 2. And he killed James
Herod the king stretched the brother of John with the
forth his hands to afflict sword.
some of the church. 3. And seeing that it
-

1. **Herod the king.** See note on Luke i. 5 for an account of the Herods. Herod Agrippa was son of Aristobulus, grandson of Herod the Great, and nephew of the Herod (Antipas) who clothed our Lord in the white robe. His youth was spent in Rome in great adversity, where, however, he became intimate with the young Caligula. On the accession of Caligula he was made tetrarch of Iturea and Abilina, and later still, when Herod Antipas fell into disgrace with the emperor and was banished to Lyons, his tetrarchy of Galilee was added to his nephew's dominions. He then received the title of king, and as Claudius, on succeeding to the Empire, abolished the governorship of Judea, and gave over to him that region also, he was, at the time referred to in this chapter, king of as wide a kingdom as his grandfather. As it would have been impossible for a forger writing at a later date to deal so exactly with these political changes in the Holy Land, St. Luke's accurate reference to "Herod the king" is a proof of the genuineness of his history.

At the same time. Just when Barnabas and Saul arrived.

Stretched forth his hands to afflict. It was part of the policy of Herod to curry favour with the Jewish authorities. (Cp. verse 3: "seeing that it pleased the Jews.")

2. **James the brother of John.** The son of Zebedee and Salome, generally called the Greater, to distinguish him from St. James the son of Alphaeus. He was one of the three chosen disciples of our Lord who alone witnessed the raising of Jairus's daughter, the Transfiguration, and the Agony in the Garden. By our Lord he and his brother John were surnamed Boanerges, sons of thunder, in allusion to their ardent zeal.

With the sword. (Cp. Matt. xiv. 10.) This was not a Jewish,

pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Now it was in the days of the azymes.¹)

4. Whom as soon as he had apprehended, he cast into prison, delivering him to four quaternions of

soldiers to be kept, intending after the pasch to bring him forth to the people.

5. Peter, therefore, was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing by the church to God for him.

Peter is delivered by an Angel—vv. 6-11.

6. And when Herod forth, that very night Peter would have brought him was sleeping between two

A. V.

¹ Unleavened bread.

but a Roman form of execution. Why Herod should have singled out St. James we cannot tell.

3. It was in the days of the azymes—i.e., "of unleavened bread."

The Pasch was so called because during the seven days while it lasted only unleavened bread could be eaten, and for security's sake all leaven (i.e., yeast or barm) was carefully removed from all the houses. (Cp. note on Luke xxii. 1.) It was also held to be a very sacred season, and Jewish feelings would have been violently outraged had anything been done to St. Peter till it was over. (Cp. Matt. xxvi. 5.)

4. Four quaternions. Four sets of four each, sixteen in all. These four sets relieved each other every three hours, in order to ensure greater vigilance. Two were fastened by chains to the prisoner and two guarded the door of the prison.

Intending after the Pasch. (See note on verse 3.)

5. Prayer was made without ceasing (*ἐκτενής*). Most earnest prayer was made. The anxiety felt, so special in this case, speaks to their recognition of Peter's office as Head of the Apostolic Band, and of the Church itself. They prayed earnestly and perseveringly, feeling that if Peter were slain the loss would be terrible. Note, too, how God tested the prayer and trust of the faithful: it was not until they were on the verge of losing all hope that He vouchsafed to hear their prayer.

6. Bound with two chains. Both his hands were chained to the two soldiers who guarded him.

soldiers, bound with two chains: and the guards before the door kept the prison.

7. And, behold, an Angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the room: and he, striking Peter on the side, raised him up, saying: Arise quickly. And the chains fell off from his hands.

8. And the Angel said to him: Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said to him: Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9. And going out, he followed him, and knew not that it was true, which

was done by the Angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10. And having passed through the first and the second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city, which of itself opened to them. And going out, they passed on through one street; and immediately the Angel departed from him.

11. And Peter, coming to himself, said: Now I know indeed that the Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

Kept the prison. 'Kept the watch over the gate of the prison. What a picture of tranquil sleep in the midst of the most threatening danger on the part of one sustained by a perfect trust in God!

7. *Raised him up.* Awakened him.

8. *Gird thyself.* The Apostle had removed his cloak and lay down to sleep in his tunic or undergarment. Over the tunic the girdle was usually worn, except in sleep.

Cast thy garment about thee—i.e., thy cloak (ἱμάτιον).

9. *He knew not that it was true—i.e., real.* It felt like a vision in a dream. Apparently his consciousness to external phenomena was suspended whilst his mind and senses were absorbed in the contemplation of the Angel.

10. *Having passed through the first and the second ward.* That is, the first and second guards (φυλακήν).

The iron gate on the side leading to the city, just the one wanted.

11. *Peter coming to himself.* The Angel departing, he returned to his outer consciousness, and realized the full significance of what had happened.

Peter visits his friends in Jerusalem, and then departs—
 vv. 12-17.

12. And considering, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where many were assembled, and praying.

13. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhode.

14. And as soon as she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy,

but running in, she told that Peter stood before the gate.

15. But they said to her : Thou art mad. But she affirmed that it was so. Then said they : It is his Angel.

16. But Peter continued knocking : and when they had opened, they saw him, and were astonished.

17. But he, beckoning to

12. **Considering** (συνιδών). Better, "perceiving how things were." *John, surnamed Mark.* Though some have questioned it, it is morally certain that this was the second evangelist ; for we have Barnabas and Saul taking him with them (verse 25), Paul calling him "sister's son to Barnabas" (Col. iv. 10) when he was writing from Rome, and St. Peter, likewise writing from Rome at the same time, calling him "my son (in the faith) Mark" (1 Peter v. 13). We have, then, besides Saul and Barnabas, another source from which St. Luke could have obtained the details of this important history. The particulars, too, seem quite in the picturesque style of St. Mark's Gospel.

13. **A damsel came to hearken.** A slave girl, probably. She came to listen without opening. It was in the night, and they were all on their guard against hostile visitors.

14. **She opened not the gate for joy.** How perfectly natural, so as to afford another indication of genuineness.

15. **Thou art mad.** They had not expected such a wonderful miracle, but, at most, a deliverance through some natural agency.

It is his Angel. Here we have proof of a belief in guardian Angels, a belief which our Lord confirmed (Matt. xviii. 10). They seem also to have believed that the guardian Angel when appearing must take the same appearance as its charge.

17. **He beckoning to them with his hand.** So that they should keep silence and listen to him without delay.

them with his hand to hold these things to James and their peace, told how the to the brethren. And being Lord had brought him out gone out, he went into another place, and he said : Tell

Herod punishes the gaolers, and is struck down by God—
vv. 18-23.

18. As soon as it was day and going down from there was no small confusion Judea to Cesarea, he stayed among the soldiers, what was there. became of Peter.

19. And when Herod had sought for him, and found with the Tyrians and the him not, having examined Sidonians : but they with one the keepers, he commanded accord came to him, and they should be led away : having gained Blastus, who was the king's chamberlain,

Tell these things to James—i.e., to James the "Lord's brother" (cp. note on xv. 13), to whom was assigned the special charge of the Christians at Jerusalem.

He went into another place. It is not said where this other place was—but see Appendix II. for an account of the important question which turns on the expression.

19. *He commanded they should be led away—i.e., to execution.* The phrase is technical. A Roman gaoler was answerable with his life for the safe custody of his prisoner. (Cp. xvi. 27.)

And going down to Cesarea, he stayed there. It is quite consistent with St. Luke's style of writing to assume an interval between the escape of Peter at Jerusalem and this going down of Herod to Cesarea. The importance of this point will be seen from its bearing, discussed in Appendix III., on the question of St. Peter's Roman episcopate.

20. The account of Herod's tragic death is added as pointing out how God's protection of the infant Church was shown by the removal of its persecutor.

He was angry with the Tyrians and Sidonians. The Phenicians, whose chief towns were Tyre and Sidon. We can only conjecture the cause of Herod's displeasure.

they desired peace, because their countries were nourished by him.

21. And upon a day appointed Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on the judgment-seat, and made an oration to them,

22. And the people with

acclamations cried out : It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23. And forthwith an Angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honour to God : and, eaten up by worms, he expired.

Blastus. A Roman name. Perhaps one of his companions during his exile at Rome, whom Herod had now raised to the post of chamberlain, or chief minister.

Their countries were nourished by him. Phenicia, like England, being a trading country, could not grow enough corn to support its numerous population ; they depended for their supplies upon Palestine. As the famine was just then pressing they had an urgent reason for wishing to recover Herod's friendship.

21. Upon a day appointed. Josephus (xix. 8, § 2) tells us that Herod was holding a festival in honour of Claudius, and the date points to its having been a rejoicing to honour the return of Claudius from the conquest of Britain.

In royal apparel. Probably in silver tissue. Josephus tells us the festival was in the theatre, and the throne may have been the royal platform there. The oration was to the Tyrians and Sidonians, doubtless full of self-glorification, and intended to impress the visitors with his power and majesty.

22. The people cried out. Evidently the Gentiles, who were accustomed to give divine honours to sovereigns ; and, perhaps, the Tyrians and Sidonians, put up to it by their friend Blastus. According to Josephus, they said to him, "Be propitious to us, for hitherto we have feared you as a man, but from now we confess you to be more than mortal."

23. Forthwith an Angel of the Lord struck him. Herod must have accepted the blasphemous tribute, and hence the sudden retribution. The "forthwith" need not mean that the disease showed itself at that moment, though it may have begun then. He lingered five days and then expired, as we know from Josephus.

The word of God multiplies, and Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch—vv. 24, 25.

24. But the word of the Lord increased and multiplied. salem, having fulfilled their ministry, taking with them John, who was surnamed Mark.
25. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jeru-

24. But the word of the Lord increased and multiplied, in contrast to the destruction of its enemies—*i.e.*, in its spread from place to place, and from convert to convert.
25. And Barnabas and Saul returned. When they had finished their work in distributing the alms. This notice, coming at the end of the account about Peter and Herod, is further evidence that Saul was a witness at least of what befell Peter.

QUESTIONS.

1. Give some account of Herod, and of his motives for persecuting the Church. How did he obtain the title of king?
2. What do we know concerning St. James the Greater?
3. Relate the circumstances of St. Peter's delivery from prison.
4. What was the occasion of Herod being struck by an Angel?
5. What other kings have died from the same disease?
6. How did the Phenicians contrive to appease Herod's wrath.
7. Explain the terms, "azymes," "four quaternions," "the first and second wards."
8. Explain with reference to the context :—
 - (a) Prayer was made without ceasing for him.
 - (b) Bound with two chains.
 - (c) Gird thyself, cast thy garment about thee.
 - (d) They said : Thou art mad.
 - (e) It is his Angel.
 - (f) Tell these things to James.
 - (g) He went into another place.
 - (h) Their countries were nourished by him.
 - (i) The people cried : It is the voice of a god.

APPENDIX I.

THE PREPARATION OF THE NATIONS FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING.

TO obtain a clear idea of the work of the Apostles, of its difficulties, and the secret of its success, it is necessary to bear in mind the state of the world at the time when they went forth on their mission. Four facts are specially noticeable.

1. The wide diffusion of the Greek language. Partly through the propensity of the Greeks to emigrate and engage in trade, and partly through the conquests of Alexander the Great, the Greek language was known and employed in all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, and so became a practically universal language.

2. The Roman conquest following on those of Alexander had welded all the countries mentioned into one political unity; and had likewise established a complete system of communication by road and water between the different parts of the empire.

3. The dispersion of the Jews. When Cyrus gave the captives leave to return from Babylon, a comparatively small number availed themselves of the opportunity. The vast majority remained, and in course of time emigrated to other countries, dividing themselves into an Eastern and a Western stream. It is with the Western dispersion that the Acts of the Apostles brings us into contact. In every city of the Roman Empire the Jews of this Western dispersion were to be found, and in all the principal cities they had established themselves in great force. At Rome a petition against Archelaus (Matt. ii. 22) was signed by 8,000 resident Jews, who must have represented a very large number of others. They formed as much as a third of the population of Alexandria, and a very noticeable proportion of the population of Antioch. At Damascus they are reckoned by one writer, though in figures doubtless exaggerated, as fifty thousand. And the Book of Acts is itself a witness to how large an extent they were to be found in the various cities which St. Paul visited in his missionary journeys. Nor were they only numerous; they were also influential by reason of their skill in trade, which at Alexandria had placed the important grain trade almost entirely in their hands, and they had received privileges from various rulers and emperors which enabled them to set up their synagogues everywhere, to preserve their national customs in all their exclusiveness, and even to be under ethnarchs or rulers of their own race for ecclesiastical purposes; as, for instance, at Alexandria (where he was called the alabarch), at Antioch and Damascus. Although, however, these Jews of the dispersion preserved their exclusiveness, they did not remain altogether unaffected by their surroundings. They learned to speak the Greek language, and they yielded in many ways to the influence of Greek thought and manners. The result was to make them distasteful to their more uncompromising fellow-countrymen in Judea; but, on the other hand, it prepared them to act as intermediaries between the Apostles and the Gentiles as soon as the time came for addressing the Gospel to the latter.

4. The fourth important fact which prepared the way for the evangelization of the empire was the number of proselytes to the Jewish religion which were everywhere found. It is true that the Jews were much disliked by the Gentiles in whose midst they lived, and that they cordially reciprocated the feeling. It is true, also, that the widespread corruption of morals prejudiced the multitude against a religion which held up a high standard of purity.

Still, out of the depths of the general degradation a disposition favourable to the religion of the Jews had sprung up. Paganism was being found out by its own votaries, and many a truth-loving and purity-loving soul, in revolt against its absurd legends, its empty observances, and its demoralizing influences, was looking round, like Cornelius (xi. 4), for a religion which would really satisfy the heart and ennoble life. Some sought for it, indeed, though in vain, in Stoicism, but many were struck by the worship and teaching of the synagogues. Hence these places, open to all, came to be frequented by Gentiles (Acts xiii. 43, 44, xiv. 1), with the result that many passed over to one or other of the recognized stages of proselytism. It is probably to this cause that we must attribute the diffusion through the empire of the belief that a deliverer would come out of the East who would rule over the world (Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 13). In the synagogues they heard of, and were captivated by, Israel's expectation of her Messiah, and the belief thus propagated must have reacted on and intensified their disposition towards proselytism. On woman more than on man pressed the burden of the prevalent demoralization. It was natural, therefore, that she should lead the movement towards the synagogues, and we are not surprised to find that the female proselytes often formed an influential body. At Damascus, Josephus tells us that the great majority of the women were proselytes, and this accords with what we read in Acts xiii. 50, xvi. 13, 14, xvii. 4. Still, from the women the movement spread to the men, and largely affected them.

The efficacy of the first preaching of the Gospel is to be discerned chiefly in its own inherent power to move the heart of man, and in the miracles by which it was attended. Still, grace builds upon nature, and the four facts mentioned contributed powerfully to the good end. It was under the protection of Rome's sovereignty, and along the roads which her energy had beaten out, that the Apostles of Christ, with the speech of Greece on their tongues, went systematically through the cities of the empire, and always found synagogues where they could gain an immediate hearing, and could pass from the Hellenistic Jews to their proselytes, and from them to the well-disposed among the Gentiles. The account already cited of what happened at Antioch in Pisidia may clearly be taken as an illustration of what ordinarily occurred in the towns which they visited. They entered the synagogue, and having joined in the prayers, waited till they were invited, as strangers from Jerusalem, to address the congregation. Among the listeners were many proselytes, who were themselves moved, and the excitement roused by the unusual character of the address causing disputes, attracted a wide-spread attention, so that on the next occasion others, in large numbers, flocked in to listen. In this manner the word of God was able to reach the hearts attuned to its message, and the way was prepared for further intercourse with the Apostles, and to eventual conversion.

APPENDIX II.

THE FIRST PLANTING OF THE FAITH.

THE object of the "Acts of the Apostles" is manifestly to give an account of the first planting of the Christian Faith in Judea, Samaria, and even in the uttermost parts of the earth. The book is entitled, however, not *the* Acts, but Acts (*i.e.*, some Acts) of Apostles, and the difference is not without its meaning. St. Luke does not undertake to give a complete account of the planting of the faith, for he has nothing to say of the work done by nine out of the twelve Apostles, or even of the work of St. Peter from the time of his departure from Jerusalem to "another place" (xii. 17). The reason is because St. Luke (like the other New Testament writers) had no thought of writing a history for its own sake, but wished only to show that the new faith rested on a solid foundation of fact. It is this which he has successfully done by recording (1) the "acts" of the Apostle whom he knew best, and whose work was spread over an extended area, including the most important districts of the empire; and, (2) as a necessary preliminary, connecting them with those previous "acts" which formed the head stream of the Apostolic ministry.

On the day of Pentecost the gift of tongues was bestowed on the Twelve, and the miracle caused the multitudes from various parts then present in the city to come together and inquire into its meaning. Then Peter stood up with the eleven and began to exercise his office as an appointed witness of the Resurrection. "This Jesus whom you crucified is the Messiah of whom our prophets speak, and God has raised Him from the dead. Repent therefore, and be baptized." Such was the burden of his witness and "they that received his word were baptized: and there was added to the Church that day about three thousand souls" (ii. 41). Not long after, Peter and John, entering the temple, once more astonished the people by healing the lame man. Again they gathered round Peter to listen; again he repeated his witness, and exhorted to baptism. This time the priests and rulers interrupted, and even put the Apostles under arrest. But for all that, "many of them who had heard believed, and the number of the men (to which the number of the women and children must be added) was made five thousand" (iv. 4). The judicial inquiry came to nought in the patent absence of any sufficient cause of offence, and in the enthusiasm for the prisoners which their miracles had kindled. The fate of Ananias and Saphira followed next, and gave rise to another influx of converts: "The people magnified them, and the multitude of men and women that believed in the Lord was the more increased" (v. 14). It was on this occasion that the sick were brought out in their beds and laid along the sides of the streets through which Peter was to pass. No wonder if the priests and rulers felt that they must do something now if they were not to be conquered by the movement. But again their efforts only served to advance the cause they were desirous of suppressing. Once more they resorted to imprisonment, but the doors were unbound by an Angel, and in the morning the prisoners were found preaching publicly in the temple; whilst the judges, in

their impotence, were fain to listen, though much against their will, to the wise counsels of Gamaliel.

It was some four years after the Ascension that the blood of the first martyr was shed, and the martyrdom, though its immediate effect was to raise a persecution, proved to be the very means, designed under God's providence, for the extension of the faith into other lands. The disciples were dispersed through Judea and Samaria (viii. 1), and even into Phenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (xi. 19), and wherever they went they told their message and found hearts willing to receive it. Even to a region so remote as Ethiopia was a bearer of the good news despatched by the deacon Philip (viii. 39). Still more momentous for the spread of the faith was the effect of St. Stephen's martyrdom upon one who had been active in promoting it. We cannot doubt but that the sight of the dying saint, his face radiant with the glory of heaven, was the first of that series of signal graces which, culminating in the vision on the road to Damascus, converted Saul the persecutor into Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles. But whilst the thirteenth Apostle was being gradually formed for his work in the quietude of his native Cilicia, the chief of the Apostles was inspired by God to throw open the gates to the Gentile multitudes by removing the barriers which had hitherto opposed such a hindrance to their conversion. Peter was summoned from Joppe to Cesarea, and, after witnessing an outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Cornelius and his household, admitted them to Holy Baptism. The persecution under Herod seems to have ended the period during which the Apostles understood it to be their duty to remain in the Holy Land, and we are told that Peter then went to "another place." Filling in from the unhesitating tradition of the Fathers, we may assign to this date his departure, first to Antioch and afterwards to Rome, where he founded the See in which his Primacy should descend.

It is here that the first part of the Acts ends. The second is concerned with the ministry of St. Paul, an outlined account of which has been given in Appendix I. to Acts, Part II. of this series.

APPENDIX III.

CHRONOLOGY OF ACTS.

THE sacred writers of the New Testament having, as has been said, a dogmatic purpose in view, and not realizing the interest of history for its own sake, have not furnished us with many dates, even in works like the Acts and the four Gospels. We can, however, with a little industry, discover the approximate dates of one or two events, and aided by these we can, with more or less probability, set the other events in their appropriate chronological places.

In regard to the Acts, we can, with the aid of contemporary history (chiefly of the writings of Josephus), fix three dates with some accuracy. One is that of the descent of the Holy Ghost (ii. 1), for this was in the very year of the Crucifixion, and it is sufficiently ascertained that the Crucifixion was in A.D. 29 or 30. Another is that of the death of Herod Agrippa I. (xii. 23), for we know from Josephus that this was in the fourth year of Claudius, or A.D. 44. The third date which we can fix approximately is that of St. Paul's voyage to Rome (Acts xxvii. 1), which must have been in A.D. 61 or 62, for it was very shortly after the arrival of Festus to succeed Felix in the procuratorship of Judea (xxiv. 27, xxv. 1, 6, 13). Felix must have reached Rome, whither he had been summoned to answer certain charges, in A.D. 60 or 61, as he was certainly there before A.D. 62, since he escaped condemnation through the efforts of his brother Pallas, and Pallas was put to death in A.D. 62. Nor could he have been there long before A.D. 62, because before leaving Palestine he had sent certain priests to Rome to be tried by Nero; and Josephus tells us he himself made a visit to Rome to defend these accused priests in A.D. 63, a visit he presumably undertook as soon as the need arose.

One or two other dates we can also fix with reasonable probability. St. Paul tells us that "three years" after his conversion he "came to Jerusalem to see Peter" (Gal. i. 18), and that when he left Damascus for this purpose that city was governed in the name of the Arabian king Aretas (2 Cor. xi. 32). Now, it does not seem likely that Aretas would have been allowed to dispossess Herod Antipas of this portion of his dominions before the accession of Herod's enemy, Caligula, which was in A.D. 37. We may then assign St. Paul's journey to Jerusalem to A.D. 38, and his conversion to A.D. 35 or 36; and, as his later journey to Jerusalem for the settlement of the controversy about Jewish observances, which we must identify with the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.), was fourteen years after his journey there from Damascus (Gal. ii. 1), we obtain for the date of the Council of Jerusalem A.D. 51, 52. This later date is also to some extent independently attested by Acts xviii. 2, for St. Paul must have reached Corinth about a year after the Council of Jerusalem, and shortly before his arrival Aquila and Priscilla had been driven out of Rome by an edict of Claudius; whilst a year and a half later, Gallio, the brother of Seneca the Philosopher, came to Corinth as Proconsul. Now, although the dates of neither of these two events are

directly ascertainable, there are colourable grounds for assigning the edict of Claudius to A.D. 51, and the proconsulate of Gallio to A.D. 53, 54.

We have thus a chronological framework to fill in; and as St. Paul's *third* missionary journey (xviii. 23 to xxi. 15), during which he spent two years and three-quarters at Ephesus and in Achaia, must have lasted about four years; his *second* journey (xv. 36 to xviii. 22), during which he spent a year and a half and "many days" (Acts xviii. 11, 18) at Corinth, must have lasted about three years; his *first* journey (xiii. 1 to xiv. 25), two or three years; and his stay at Antioch, after Barnabas had fetched him, over one year (xi. 29)—we may fill in the framework conjecturally thus:

- A.D. 29 or 30. The Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost (ii. 1).
 33. Martyrdom of St. Stephen (vii. 1).
 35 or 36. Saul's journey to Damascus, and conversion (ix. 3-22).
 38. Returns to Jerusalem "to see Peter," and then retires into Cilicia (ix. 23; Gal. i. 18).
 39 or 40. St. Peter receives Cornelius and his household into the Church (x.).
 40 or 41. Barnabas fetches Saul from Tarsus to Antioch (xi. 25).
 41 or 42. Barnabas and Saul go up to Jerusalem with alms for the famine-stricken (xi. 30).
 St. James is martyred (xii. 2), and St. Peter, released from prison by the Angel, goes to another place. (See note on xii. 17.)
 44. Death of Herod Agrippa I. (xii. 23).
 Barnabas and Paul start on the *first* missionary journey (xiii. 4).
 47 or 48. They return to Antioch and remain there for some time (xiv. 26).
 51. The Council of Jerusalem (xv.; Gal. ii. 1). Peter goes to Antioch and is rebuked by St. Paul (Gal. ii. 11).
 Paul and Silas start on the *second* missionary journey (xv. 36).
 52. Reach Corinth (xviii. 1). Paul writes his two Epistles to the Thessalonians and his Epistle to the Galatians.
 54. Returns to Antioch (xviii. 22).
 55. Paul with Silas starts on the *third* missionary journey (xviii. 23).
 58. He writes the First Epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus, and a little later the Second Epistle from Philippi. Also, on reaching Corinth, he writes his Epistle to the Romans.
 59. Returns, and goes up to Jerusalem, where he is imprisoned for two years (xxi. 1-17, xxiv. 27).
 61. Sent to Rome (xxvii. 1).

The above dates refer to events recorded in the Acts. A few others may be added to complete, as far as we know it, the chronology of the lives of St. Peter and Paul.

St. Peter's earlier history is ascertainable from the Gospels. St. Paul, since he "gave his vote" (if this is the correct translation) for the martyrdom of St. Stephen and others, must have been about thirty at the time, namely in A.D. 33, and accordingly he must have been born about A.D. 3. His birthplace was Tarsus, in Cilicia, but he spent his boyhood in Jerusalem, and would have begun to "sit at the feet of Gamaliel" when he was twelve years old, or in A.D. 15.

An unhesitating tradition of the early Church tells us that after remaining twelve years in Judea—which all the Apostles were ordered by our Lord to do before they dispersed themselves through the world—St. Peter went away to Antioch, where he founded his first See, and presently placed in it as his successor St. Evodius; and then to Rome, where he founded the See in which his Primacy was to descend. He is said to have been Bishop of Rome for twenty-five years, though this does not mean that he renounced all other work and resided there continuously. In A.D. 67 or 68 he was crucified at Rome by Nero. This record of tradition fits very well into the narrative of Acts. A.D. 41 or 42 is twelve years from the date of the Ascension, and from A.D. 41, 42 to A.D. 67 or 68 is twenty-five years plus an interval long enough for the establishment of a See at Antioch. As the Council of Jerusalem was about A.D. 51, and was followed by the dispute at Antioch, we must suppose that at this time St. Peter had returned from Rome for a visit, perhaps driven out by the edict of Claudius.

As regards St. Paul's life subsequent to his first arrival in Rome (A.D. 61) the following points are probable. Acts xxviii. 30 seems to imply that after a two years' detention he was released. This would be, if the above-given dates are accepted, in A.D. 63; and he could not have been in Rome in A.D. 64, or he would have fallen at once beneath the sword of Nero, who in that year set the city on fire, and cast the suspicion on the Christians. After leaving Rome on this occasion, he probably went to Spain, for we know from Rom. xv. 27, 28 that his intention had been to pass from Rome to Spain, and St. Clement of Rome tells us that he travelled "as far as the extreme limits of the West" (*ἐπὶ τὸ τέρμα τῆς δύσεως*). Returning from Spain, he went most probably back to his previous headquarters at Antioch or Jerusalem. (Cp. Heb. xiii. 23.) From Antioch or Jerusalem he must have made another journey, in which he passed through Crete (Tit. i. 5); revisited his Asiatic foundations (1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. iv. 20); went thence to Troas (2 Tim. iv. 13); Philippi (Philip. ii. 24); Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3); Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth—though of these there is no record—and Nicopolis in Epirus (Tit. iii. 12). These visits will have occupied his time until he was arrested a second time, and ended his life by martyrdom, along with St. Peter, at Rome in 67 or 68.

To understand these inferences as to the facts of St. Paul's last missionary journey, it is necessary to bear in mind that the Epistles to the Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and to Philemon were written during his first Roman captivity; the Epistle to the Hebrews (if it is his), in Rome or Spain, after his first captivity was over; the First Epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus, during his last journey; and the Second Epistle to Timothy during his second Roman imprisonment. The occasions of his other Epistles have been indicated in the commentary on Acts, Part II. (Cp. notes on chapters xviii. 2, xix. 1, xx. 3.)

APPENDIX IV.

THE DISCOURSES IN THE FIRST PART OF ACTS.

In this portion of Acts the discourses of only two speakers are recorded at any length—those of St. Peter and St. Stephen. Five discourses of St. Peter have been thus preserved to us, (1) on the day of Pentecost, addressed to the multitudes (ii. 14-40); (2) at the Beautiful Gate, after the healing of the lame man (iii. 13-26); (3) addressed to the priests and rulers when they charged him to desist from his preaching (iv. 8-12); (4) to the priests and rulers on his second arrest (v. 30-32); (5) to Cornelius and his household (x. 34-43). All these speeches are characterized by great simplicity, in this resembling the two epistles which bear the Apostle's name. His point is in all cases the same: 'This Jesus whom you have crucified is the Messiah to whom the prophets bear witness, and through whose name alone men can be saved.' In proof that our Lord's coming was predicted, he selects passages from the Old Testament, but his selections are limited to the words of Moses, of David, and of Joel. In his address to the household of Cornelius, he adapts himself to the mental state of his hearers, recognizing that God, who does not respect persons, finds faithful hearers in every nation, and appealing to the evidence of our Lord's preaching and miracles, with only a cursory allusion to prophecies with which he could not assume that his audience was familiar.

In St. Stephen's discourse we meet with a more "philosophical" treatment of Jewish history. He surveys it as a whole and notes the conflicting causes of which it was the outcome—the covenant which lay at the roots of all, the fidelity to his part in the covenant shown throughout by the God who called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but in sharp contrast to this the infidelity of the people to their part, and the persistent perversity with which, when God sent prophet after prophet to recall them to their duty, they ever turned upon these His messengers, murmured against them, disobeyed them, and even slew them. He notes also the true place which the tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, with all the ceremonies and sacrifices, were ordained to hold in the worship of Israel, and distinguishes this from the cold formalism and spiritual pride which had become the characteristic mark of Judaism. With this comprehensive view before him, he claims that the treatment accorded to Jesus of Nazareth and His teaching was but the culminating act of revolt against the covenant, and he breaks forth into a burning invective against the stiff-necked race, which was always resisting the Holy Ghost. It is a wonderful testimony to the wisdom and grace of character of the young deacon that he should have been able in so short a time to comprehend the Christian position with such a breadth of view, and to present it so effectively to his hearers; nor is it, surely, a mere coincidence that we find in his discourse the germs of so much of what we are accustomed to call Pauline doctrine. (Cp. Acts vii. 3, 5, 6, 8, 53 with Gal. iii. 15-19, Rom. iv. 1-3, 10-14, iii. 1, 2.) Must we not infer that Paul, in his solitude in Arabia, meditated much on the words which, even at the time of their utterance, had impressed him so deeply?

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CHAPTERS XIII.-XVI.

(For the convenience of Candidates, these four chapters from Part II. are reprinted separately.)

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CHAPTER XIII.

ORDINATION OF SAUL AND BARNABAS.

1. Now there were in the church which was at Antioch prophets and teachers, among whom was Barnabas, and Simon¹ who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manahen² who was the ~~first prophet~~³ of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2. And as they were min-

ANGLICAN AUTHORISED VERSION.

¹ Simeon. ² Manaen. ³ Which had been brought up with Herod.

1. **Antioch.** Capital of Syria, on the Orontes. There were other towns of the same name, which were distinguished by an additional name, as Antioch of Pisidia (xiii. 14).

Prophets and teachers (προφῆταις). Those who declared by divine inspiration the truths of God. In Ephesians iv. 24, prophets and teachers are mentioned with others, who like them received special gifts or "charismata". In the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xii. 10) the gift of prophecy is described. It did not necessarily include the power to foretell the future, but sometimes did (Acts xi. 28).

Niger. Probably so called from his swarthy complexion.

Lucius of Cyrene. Probably one of those "who came to Antioch preaching the Lord Jesus" (chap. ix. 20). Cyrene was a town of Libya.

Manahen. An Essene prophet of this name foretold the future greatness of Herod the Great. Perhaps the monarch in his gratitude carried off the prophet's son of the same name to his palace, and had him brought up with Herod Antipas, giving him the same state and education.

2. **Ministering.** This seems to show that some of the prophets and teachers were bishops also, but it was not necessary for a prophet to be a bishop, or a bishop to be a prophet.

istering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas for the work to which I have taken them.

3. Then they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away.

They preach in Cyprus; Sergius Paulus is converted—
VV. 4-12.

4. So they, being sent by Seleucia; and from thence the Holy Ghost, went to they sailed to Cyprus.

Gr. *λειτουργεῖν*, which is the word used in Scripture for priestly sacrifice. From this is derived the word "Liturgy"—which is chiefly applied to rites concerning the Holy Sacrifice. Hence the Liturgies of St. James, St. Chrysostom, etc., were the terms used in the Eastern Church for the rites which were commonly supposed to have been compiled by these Saints for the Holy Sacrifice.

To the Lord. This would seem to imply that they were engaged in some service specially directed to the honour and glory of God, such as a Holy Sacrifice. Preaching would be ministering to men rather than God. Probably it was the Holy Sacrifice during which Saul and Barnabas were ordained to the episcopate.

Fasting. The prophets were evidently employed in a service of the Lord to which the serious preparation of fasting was necessary.

The Holy Ghost said. By an internal inspiration to which the prophets gave utterance.

Separate Me (*ἀφορίσατε δὴ*). The "δὴ" is emphatic. *Now* separate—"μοι"—for My special service. They were separated and chosen from the rest as "vessels of election," for preaching the Gospel to the world. *Taken them* (*προσκέκλημαι*), literally "called to," or "sent for".

3. *Then they fasting.* In the Gr. these tenses are *aorist*. Again attention is drawn to the fasting of the ministers, implying some specially religious work, such as the ordination service. All point to this act as one of ordination of Saul and Barnabas to the episcopate—the liturgy, the fasting, and imposition of hands. This probably took place A.D. 46.

4. *Sent by the Holy Ghost.* The newly ordained regarded their orders to set out as the voice of the Holy Spirit. Here St. Paul's First Missionary Journey commences. The account of it occupies chaps. xiii. 4—xiv. 26.

5. And when they were come to **Salamina**¹ they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also **John** in their ministry.

6. And when they had gone through the whole island as far as **Paphos**, they

found a certain man, a magician, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was **Bar-jesu**,

7. Who was with the proconsul,² **Sergius Paulus**, a prudent man. This man, sending for **Barnabas** and **Saul**, desired to hear the word of God.

A. V.

¹ Salamis.

² Deputy of the country.

Seleucia. The port of Antioch about sixteen miles off, founded by Seleucus Nicanor, one of Alexander's great generals.

Cyprus. The island was among other things famous for its copper, which the Romans therefore called "cuprum".

5. **Salamina.** Better, Salamis, a town situated on the eastern extremity of the island. It is now called *Famogosta* (*fama augusta*) from the brilliant reputation which the town gained for its heroic resistance for seventy years against the attacks of the Turks, to whom it yielded in 1570.

John also in their ministry. The word (*ὑπηρέτης*) means a subordinate official or personal attendant; he may have been employed in administering baptism. Some writers hold that he is the same person as St. Mark the Evangelist.*

6. **Paphos** was at the western extremity of the island and the head-quarters of the proconsul. It was the centre of the worship of Venus, and notorious, even in those days, for its immorality.

A **sorcerer** (*μάγος*). The Magi originally came from Persia, and were the mathematicians and students of science of ancient days. They were held in great esteem by the common people as the possessors of some mysterious gift. Hence it came to pass that those who practised secret arts and sorceries were termed *magi*. **Bar-jesu** means son of Joshua or Saviour, a name borne by others besides our Lord.

7. **Proconsul.** The Roman provinces at this time were administered by proconsuls or *proprætors*. Those provinces that needed military control were placed immediately under the emperor, and were governed by *proprætors*. The peaceful provinces were under the

8. But Elymas the magician (for so his name is interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith.

9. Then Saul, who also is Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, looking upon him,

10. Said: O thou full of all¹ guile and of all deceit, son of the devil, enemy of all justice, thou dost not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord.

11. And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a time. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and going about, he sought some one to lead him by the hand.

12. Then the proconsul, when he had seen what was done, believed, admir-
ing at the doctrine² of the Lord.

A. V.

¹ Full of all subtilty and deceit. ² Being astonished at the doctrine.

jurisdiction of the Senate, and their governors were termed proconsuls. It is an indirect witness to the accuracy of St. Luke's narrative that he terms the governor a proconsul, as Augustus in A.D. 22 had placed Cyprus under the senatorial jurisdiction.

Desired (ἐπεζητήσεν). Eagerly sought in quickness.

8. Elymas. An Arabic name signifying much the same as *magus*, that is, a wise man (from the same root as the Turkish "Ulemah").

9. Then Saul, otherwise Paul. Henceforth the Apostle is known by his name Paul. Others think that as Saul was a Roman citizen he would have a Roman *cognomen* in addition to his Hebrew name, and be Saul-Paulus. As he was now entering upon his mission to the Roman world, it would be more convenient to be known by his Roman name. It is however a little remarkable that the name of Paul was adopted immediately after the conversion of Sergius Paulus.

10. Full of all deceit (παδιουργία). A propensity to all kinds of iniquity. *Thou ceaseest not*. The Greek has more force in the interrogative, "Dost thou not cease to pervert?" etc.

11. For a time. Showing that the punishment was meant to lead him to repentance. A *mist* (ἀχλὺς). St. Luke here shows his medical knowledge. This is the term used for the disorder of the eyes where the patient sees everything through a mist or fog.

They preach in Antioch—vv. 13-52.

13. And when Paul and they who were with him had sailed from Paphos, they came to Perge¹ in Pamphylia: but John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

14. But they, passing through Perge, came to Antioch in Pisidia; and entering into the synagogue on the sabbath day, they sat down.

15. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying: Ye men, brethren, if you have any word of exhortation to make to the people, speak.

A. V.

¹ Perga in Pamphylia.

12. **Admiring** (*ἐκπλησσομένους*). Better, marvelling, at the teaching of the Lord which could strike down so powerful a magician. Tradition has it that the Apostle made Sergius Paulus a bishop, and that he preached the Gospel in Spain.

13. **They that were with him.** Probably some other fervent converts joined the little band.

John departing from them. He was frightened, says St. Chrysostom, at the journeys and dangers of the missionary career.

Perge. Capital of Pamphylia, on the River Cestrus, about seven miles from its mouth.

14. **Antioch in Pisidia.** One of the cities built by Seleucus, in memory of his father Antiochus. It lay on the slopes of Mount Taurus. It was the capital of Southern Galatia.

15. **Synagogue.** Literally, a gathering together. It was the term applied to the meeting place of the Jews, where they assembled for prayer, discussion, and instruction. The principal officers were: (1) The "rulers" of the synagogue, also termed "elders," men of leisure who managed the business matters and settled disputes. (2) The delegate or minister who recited the most sacred portions of Holy Scripture (3) The inspector or attendant; he was often the schoolmaster.

The service of the synagogue consisted of prayer, with reading and exposition of Holy Scripture. It seems to have been the practice, if a stranger entered who was qualified to give instruction, to ask him to do so. See St. Matt. iv. 23.

16. Then Paul, rising up, and with his hand bespeaking silence, said: Ye men of Israel, and you that fear God, give ear:¹

17. The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they were sojourners in the land of Egypt,² and with a mighty arm brought them out from thence.

18. And for the space of forty years endured their manners in the desert.

19. And destroying seven nations in the land of Chanaan, divided their land to them by lot:

20. As it were after four hundred and fifty years: and after these things he gave them judges, until Samuel the prophet.³

21. And afterwards they desired a king: and God gave them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, forty years.

22. And when he had re-

A. V.

¹ Give audience.

² Strangers in Egypt.

³ After that he gave them judges about the space of 450 years; the Anglican Revised Version agrees with the Catholic version.

16. **Men of Israel.** This is St. Paul's first recorded discourse. A Summary is given at the end of the chapter.

18. Some versions have *ἐτροφοφόρησεν*, he nourished and fed. St. Paul may have had in mind the passage in *Isaias* i. 2, "I have brought up children and exalted them".

19. **Divided their land by lot.** Instead of *κατεκληροδότησεν* (be divided by lot) the best MSS. have *κατεκληρονόμησεν* (to bestow an inheritance). That is, God caused the Israelites to enter upon the land of Canaan as an inheritance destined for them.

Many of the Psalms seem to point to this idea of "inheritance". "I will give thee the land of Chanaan, the lot of your inheritance" (civ. 11). See also *Ps. cxxxiv.*

20. **As it were after 450 years.** After about 450 years, reckoning from the birth of Isaac, "the child of promise". From his birth till the exodus from Egypt 405 years passed. Add to these the 40 years of wandering in the desert and you have in round numbers 450. The Authorised Version reads: "And after that He gave them Judges, about the space of 450 years". The chronology alone will show this to be inadmissible, for the Judges ruled only 350 years.

22. **After My own heart.** This is quoted from *1 Kings xiii. 14*,

moved him, he raised them up David to be king; to whom giving testimony, he said: I have found David the son of Jesse, a man according to my own heart, who shall do all my wills.

23. Of this man's seed, God, according to his promise, hath raised up to Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

24. John first preaching before his coming the baptism of penance to all the people of Israel.¹

25. And when John was fulfilling his course, he said: I am not he whom you think me to be: but, behold, he cometh after me, the shoes

of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.

26. Men, brethren, sons of the race of Abraham, and whosoever among you fear God, to you the word of this salvation is sent.

27. For they who inhabited Jerusalem, and the rulers thereof, not knowing him, nor the voices of the prophets, which are read every sabbath, judging him have fulfilled them.

28. And finding no cause of death in him, they petitioned of Pilate that they might put him to death.

29. And when they had fulfilled all things that were

A. V.

¹ When John had first preached.

but it is not clear whence the next clause is derived, "who shall do all My wills". Perhaps it merely means to say that David was a man after God's heart, because he fulfilled all His wills or precepts. It may also mean that David carried out all God's wills or designs for His chosen people.

24. The whole of this verse is in the genitive absolute, and thrown in as a parenthesis. In English it may be rendered, "John first preached the baptism of penance"—the words used by St. Mark, i. 4, St. Luke, iii. 3. The baptism of penance was an outward sign of sorrow and repentance. It was only a preparation for the baptism of Jesus by which justifying grace was imparted.

25. Note St. John's humility.

26. The word of this salvation. In v. 23 he spoke of the Saviour Jesus; this His salvation is sent to you.

27. Judging Him have fulfilled them. In condemning Christ they have fulfilled the words of the prophets. See St. Matthew's account of the Passion, where the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies is insisted upon.

written of him, taking him down from the tree, they laid him in a sepulchre.

30. But God raised him up from the dead ~~the third day~~ who was seen for many days by those

31. Who went up together with him from Galilee to Jerusalem: who to this present time are witnesses of him to the people.

32. And we declare to

you that the promise which was made to our fathers,

33. This same hath God fulfilled to our children, raising up Jesus again, as in the second Psalm also is written: Thou art my Son, ~~this day~~ have I begotten thee.

34. And that he raised him up from the dead, to return now no more to corruption, he said thus:

A. V.

¹ Omit "the third day".

32. The promise of a future Redeemer.

33. In the second psalm. Some MSS. have in the "first psalm," thereby indicating that formerly the first and second psalms were joined in one. Others think that the phrase is interpolated, as the New Testament writers do not usually give the numbers of the chapters quoted by them.

Thou art My Son. The second psalm may fittingly be described as a triumph of Christ over His enemies. The Gentiles and peoples rise up against Christ to kill Him; but He is the Son of God, and through the merits of His Passion the Gentiles are given by God into His hands.

This day is the expression for eternity. There is no past, no future with God, but one mighty present. Christ is therefore the Son of God for all eternity. It was not possible that the body assumed by the ever-living Son of God should be shut up in a tomb and decay after the manner of men, and so the power of God raised Him up from the dead. This was also foretold by the prophet Isaias when he said, "I will give the holy faithful things of David," lv. 3. The "holy things" are the holy gracious promises made to the royal prophet. These promises God will make "faithful," that is, firm, stable; they shall always stand. What are the promises made to David? The next verse tells us that.

35. "He will not suffer His Holy One to see corruption," Ps.

That I will give you the ~~holy~~
~~faithful things~~ of David.¹

35. And therefore in another place also he saith: Thou shalt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

36. For David, after he had served in his generation according to the will of God, slept:² and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

37. But he, whom God hath raised from the dead, saw no corruption.

38. Be it known, there-

fore, to you, men, brethren, that through him forgiveness of sins is preached to you: and from all the things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses,

39. In him every one who believeth is justified.

40. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken by the prophets:

41. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your

A. V.

¹ And as concerning that he raised him up . . . I will give you the sure mercies of David.

² Served his own generation by the will of God fell on sleep.

xv. 10. This prophecy could not, the text argues, be applied to David; it must refer to Christ.

36. After he had served in his generation according to the will of God. In the Greek it is, "served God's will in his lifetime".

39. In Him every one that believeth is justified. Here we have the first recorded utterance of the Apostle on Justification by Faith, a doctrine which was to be for ever associated with the name of St. Paul, a doctrine which has probably divided the religious world more than almost any theological question. To "justify" is to make just. St. Paul means that no man can look to being "justified" by a perfect observance of the law. He must look for his justification to Jesus Christ in whom he must believe. Believing in Christ implies believing in all that Christ taught, or in other words accepting the true and only religion of Jesus Christ. Of course if we wish to be justified we must do more than merely believe; we must avail ourselves of the means of forgiveness of our sins that faith points out.

40. In the prophets. As the minor prophets were generally included in one volume, a quotation from any one of

days, a ~~work~~ which you will not believe, if any man shall tell it you.

42. And as they went out, they desired them that on the next sabbath they would speak these words to them.

43. And when the synagogue was broken up,¹ many of the Jews, and of the strangers who served God, followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to

continue in the grace of God.

44. But the next sabbath day the whole city almost came together to hear the word of God.

45. And when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and contradicted those things which were said by Paul, blaspheming.

46. Then Paul and Barnabas said boldly: To you it behoved us to speak first

A. V.

¹ The congregation was broken up.

-
- them was said to be from the prophets. The quotation here given is from Habacuc i. 5.
41. **A work** is the punishment that God was about to inflict upon the Jews by the Chaldeans who ravaged their land and led the people captives. The Apostle applies this in a mystical sense to the calamities and destruction in store for the Jews if they reject the Gospel.
43. **The strangers who served God** (σεβόμενοι). That is, the "proselytes". These were of two classes. "Proselytes of righteousness" were converts to the Jewish religion, and admitted to all the rites and privileges. The second class were termed "Proselytes of the Gate". They were admitted only to the "outer courts" of the Temple, they were not circumcised, nor did they observe the ceremonial Law of Moses, but they attended the service of the synagogues, and were instructed in the moral law and the Ten Commandments.
- Continue in the Grace of God.* That is, the work begun in their hearts.
45. **They were filled with envy.** Principally the teachers who feared the loss of influence. *Blaspheming, i.e.,* speaking evil, apparently of our Lord whom Paul had preached as the Saviour of men.
46. **To you it behoved us.** It was always the custom of the Apostle to preach the Gospel first to the Jews; for in

the word of God :¹ but seeing you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the gentiles.

47. For so the Lord hath commanded us : I have set thee to be the light of the gentiles, that thou mayest be for salvation unto the utmost part of the earth.

48. And the gentiles, hearing this, were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49. And the word of the Lord was published throughout the whole country.

50. But the Jews stirred up religious and honourable women, and the chief men

A. V.

¹ Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold : it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you.

Abraham, the father of the Jews, all nations of the world were to be blessed.

47. I have set thee . . . As *Isaias* xlix. 6 had foretold that Christ was to be the light of the Gentiles, it was necessary for His Apostles to preach the glad tidings to the nations. They wished to associate the Jews in this great mission, but the narrow-minded race obstinately refused the invitation and the favours of a Redeemer.

I have set. The prophet, according to the Hebrew idiom, uses the past tense for the future. The scene was so vividly set before him that it seemed to him quite settled and passed.

48. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Calvinists use this text in support of their teaching that the salvation or eternal reprobation of each individual is predestined by God from all eternity without any reference to man's works. But the Greek word here (*τεταγμένοι*) by universal consent has been decided to have no reference to predestination. It is a military term, applied to soldiers arranged in their ranks. The sense is: As many as were disposed had a true desire of eternal life, searched out the means for reaching eternal life—these believed. Well disposed to the teachings on eternal life, they are contrasted with the Jews, who "judged themselves unworthy of eternal life".

49. Throughout the whole country. *I.e.*, the Roman province of South Galatia. It was to the inhabitants of this district that St. Paul directed his Epistle to the Galatians.

50. Religious women (*σεβόμεναι*). This term is usually in the Acts applied to the proselytes. These women were

of the city, and raised a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their territories.¹ the dust of their feet against them, came to Iconium. 52. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

51. But they, shaking off

A. V.

¹ Out of their coasts.

already converts to the Jewish faith, and probably fervent disciples of their teachers. Their husbands were men of power in the city, pagans; but, being under the influence of their wives, they were persuaded to regard Paul and Barnabas as disturbers of the peace, and hence proceeded against them.

51. **Shook off the dust.** Literally obeying our Lord's command (St. Matt. x. 15), "Whosoever shall not hear your words, going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Amen, I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that city."

Iconium. Ninety miles south-east from Antioch, on the slopes of Mount Taurus. In the middle ages it rose to great importance as the capital of the Seljuk Turks, who afterwards conquered the whole of Asia Minor. It is now known as Konieh.

52. **With joy and with the Holy Ghost.** These were the disciples that the Apostle left behind at Antioch. The persecution to which they were subjected only increased the fervour of their faith. Moreover the gifts of the Holy Ghost were usually in the early Church associated with wonderful external manifestations, such as miracles, gifts of healing and prophecy.

ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA.

1st Point.—He conciliates his audience by relating how Israel was chosen to be the people of God, and what gracious promises God made to David (vv. 17-23).

2nd Point.—He declares that Jesus is the Saviour that was promised to David (v. 23).

Proofs.—(1) St. John Baptist believed in Him, and preached a baptism of penance to prepare men for the grace of Jesus (v. 24).

(2) St. John declared Jesus to be infinitely great.

(3) The prophecies concerning the Messiah were exactly fulfilled by Jesus in His passion (vv. 27-29);

(4) And by His raising His body from the dead, which none but God could do (v. 30).

The resurrection of Christ was so important a doctrine of Christianity that the Apostle gives proofs of this.

(a) It is proved by living witnesses who saw Him after His resurrection (v. 31).

(b) It is proved from Scripture (Psalm ii.) where the Royal Prophet declares the Messiah to be the Son of God who lives for all eternity, over whom death has no power (v. 33).

(c) It is also proved from Scripture (Ps. xv.) where David prophesies that God's Holy One shall not see corruption (vv. 34-36).

3rd Point.—He announces that justifying grace may now be obtained through faith in Jesus, which the Old Law was powerless to give. He concludes by warning them that as in former days the unbelief of their fathers had drawn from heaven the chastisement of the Babylonian captivity, they must take care that a similar punishment does not overtake them for their incredulity.

QUESTIONS.

1. How are the following persons and places mentioned?—Antioch, Paphos, Iconium, Cyprus, Salamis, Manahen, Elymas, John Mark.

2. Explain the terms Prophets, Proselytes, Religious women, Proconsul, Proprætor.

3. Describe in full, (1) the punishment of Elymas, (2) the ordination of Saul and Barnabas, (3) the events that took place at Antioch in Pisidia.

4. What districts and towns were visited by St. Paul on his journey between Antioch (Syria) and Iconium?

5. Why did the Apostle change his name from Saul to Paul?

6. What was the constitution of the Jewish synagogue?

7. Give a summary of the discourse at Antioch in Pisidia and give the references therein made to the Old Testament.

8. Explain with reference to the context :—

(a) Ministering to the Lord.

(b) I have set thee a light to the Gentiles.

(c) A work in your day, a work which you will not believe if any man shall tell it to you.

(d) Every one who believeth is justified.

(e) As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

(f) Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.

(g) I will give you the holy faithful things of David.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

Paul and Barnabas preach in Iconium and Lystra—
vv. 1-6.

1. AND it came to pass Jews stirred up and incensed the minds of the together into the synagogue gentiles against the brethren.¹ of the Jews, and spoke so that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks did believe. *

2. But the unbelieving gave testimony to the word

A. V.

¹ Made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

-
1. A great multitude did believe. The tradition is that among the converts of Iconium was St. Thecla, a noble lady, held in great veneration in the early Church as the proto-martyr among women. There are some Acts of St. Thecla, which are held to be spurious, but the tradition can hardly be without foundation.
 2. The Jews were always the bitterest enemies of the Apostle. In the early Church the Jewish element was very strong, and Christianity was at its birth in danger of being strangled by the observance of all the rites and ceremonies of the Old Law which the Jewish converts wished to impose. It was against this pernicious influence that St. Paul fought with undying energy. Hence the hatred shown everywhere by the Jews to him. Humanly speaking, we owe it to the great Apostle that we Christians are not fettered with the chains of the Old Law.

Incensed (*ἐκاکωσαν*). "Filled with evil thoughts" the minds, etc. In some MSS. it is added, "but God gave peace".

3. Long time therefore they abode there. Possibly some two years.

of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.¹

4. And the multitude of the city was divided: and some indeed held with the Jews, and some with the apostles.

5. And when there was an assault made by the

gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to treat them contumeliously, and to stone them.²

6. They, understanding this,³ fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the whole country round about, and were there preaching the gospel.

A. V.

¹ Speaking boldly in the Lord.

² To use them despitefully.

³ They were ware of it and fled.

Acting confidently in the Lord. I.e., in preaching the word of the Lord.

Therefore. The reason of the delay was to prevent the opposition of the Jews from destroying the good done in those that believed.

Word of His grace. The Gospel is so called because it announces and brings God's grace.

Signs and wonders. Miracles are called "wonders" because of their marvellous character, and "signs" because they make known to us God's wishes.

4. *Some held with the Jews.* The Jews did not shrink from stirring up the dregs of the people—a matter of no great difficulty. See also their conduct at Thessalonica, chap. xvii.

5. *Assault (ῥύνη).* Better, an attempt or design to assault.

Rulers of the synagogue. From this it appears that all the trouble came from the Jews.

Stone them. This was the punishment laid down in the Law of Moses for blasphemy.

6. *Understanding.* From private warnings from their friends. The Greek order is better—"fled to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe".

Lycaonia. A dreary tableland in the interior of Asia Minor; the name means Wolf Land. There are at the present day some very remarkable ruins in this region, called by the inhabitants "roor Churches," which travellers identify with Lystra. Of the position of Derbe nothing certain is known.

8. *Perceiving that he had faith.* Our Lord always asked faith, or

The Lystrans wish to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas
—vv. 7-13.

7. Now there sat a certain man at Lystra, disabled in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

8. This man heard Paul speaking; who, looking upon him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

9. Said with a loud voice: Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked.

10. And when the multitudes had seen what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice in the Lycaonian tongue, saying: The gods in the likeness of men, are come down to us.

11. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; but Paul, Mercury; because he was the chief speaker.

12. The priest also of Jupiter, that was before the city, bringing oxen and gar-

firm belief in His power, of those for whom He proposed to work miracles.

10. **Gods are come down.** All nations at this time were possessed of the idea that the gods were coming upon earth in the likeness of men.

11. **Barnabas—Jupiter.** Barnabas was tall of stature, cheerful and open of countenance, and was the more commanding figure of the two. Hence he answered to their ideas of Jupiter. Paul was, according to his own description (2 Cor. x. 1), "lowly in presence," and suffered, as some infer, from weakness of the eyes. But as he was the "hegoumenos," the leader in speaking, the people imagined him to be Mercury, the Interpreter of the Gods.

12. **The priest of Jupiter that (who, viz., Jupiter) was before the city.** That is, had his temple near the gate of the city, as a protecting deity. It was to his priest that the multitude flocked.

Accompanied therefore by the crowd the priest entered the town with much solemnity, and halted in front of the house where the Apostles were staying. He was preparing to offer sacrifice, when they rushed out to stay such a blasphemy. The famous cartoon of Raphael has presented this scene with singular beauty.

Oxen and garlands. Oxen were the prescribed victims for Jupiter. The garlands, made of white wool, entwined with flowers, were worn by the priests, and some-

lands before the gate, would have offered sacrifice with the people. apostles, Barnabas and Paul, had heard, rending their clothes, they ran among the people, crying out.

13. Which when the

St. Paul's discourse to the Lystrans—vv. 14-17.

14. And saying : O men, why do ye these things ? sea, and all things that are in them :

We also are mortals,¹ men like unto you, preaching to you to be converted from these vain things to the living God, who made not himself without testimony, doing good from

15. Who in past generations suffered all nations to walk in their own way.

16. Nevertheless he left not himself without testimony, doing good from

A. V.

¹ We also are men of like passions with you.

times placed on the victims. It may be a *hendiadys* for "oxen crowned with garlands". The gates (*πυλῶνας*) might also mean "hall"; perhaps the hall of the house where the Apostles resided.

13. **Rending their clothes.** It was customary for the Jews, on hearing blasphemy (such as this action of the Lystrans), to tear their garments, to signify their horror at such sins. It was not unusual to tear the garment from the neck across the shoulder as far as the breast. Refer to action of Caiaphas, Matt. xxvi. 65.

14. **Mortals** (*ὁμοιοπαθεῖς*). Liable to the same ills and passions as you. *Vain things* (*ματαιῶν*). Empty, useless things are your idols.

15. **Suffered all nations to walk in their ways.** Not that God had lost His love or care for men; but in the designs of His Wisdom He decreed to grant only the more ordinary helps of His grace before the coming of Christ. He reserved His special and abundant graces for the followers of His Son. The heart of man is so prone to evil, that in spite of the ordinary helps, truly sufficient though they were, "all nations walked in their own way".

16. **Man by the light of his reason alone is able to arrive at the knowledge of the Existence of God.** He can see much "good" around him, which must come from heaven. The "rains," "the seasons," recurring so regularly, the abundant supply of "food," the fulness of

heaven, giving rains, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

17. And speaking these things, they scarce restrained the people from sacrificing to them.

St. Paul is stoned at Lystra—vv. 18-19.

18. Now there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium; and having persuaded the multitude, and having stoned Paul, they dragged him out of the city, thinking him to be dead.

19. But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and entered into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

The return journey of Paul and Barnabas—vv. 20-27

20. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch,

21. Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith; for that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

his natural life inspiring "gladness"—all point unmistakably to a Good Ruler of the world who loves mankind.

17. The Apostles' stay at Lystra was not without fruit; for we learn that Timothy and his mother Eunice, and perhaps his grandmother Lois (2 Tim. i. 5), were Lystrans, and became fervent disciples.

18. The Jews again single out Paul for their vengeance. Barnabas is let free, but Paul is visited with the legal punishment for blasphemy, *viz.*, stoning to death. This is the occasion to which he alludes, 2 Cor. xi. 25, "Once I was stoned".

19. The disciples stood round about him. The disciples also thought him dead, and kept watch over his body to preserve it from further outrages. This would probably be during the night.

He rose up. This simple narrative, no doubt, is intended to cover a wonderful miracle. The Apostle that same night was miraculously healed of his terrible wounds, and entered the city again.

21. Through many tribulations we must enter. Better, "It behoves us to enter". It behoves us to bear troubles, (1)

22. And when they had ordained for them priests¹ in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed.

23. And passing through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia.

24. And having spoken the word of the Lord in Perge, they went down to Attalia :

A. V.

¹ Ordained them elders in every church.

because such is God's will, (2) because our head Christ so lived and died, (3) because all the saints have led lives of suffering.

22. When they had ordained (*χειροτονήσαντες*). Lit., "stretched out hands". This might be by holding them up, as was done in a show of hands. Hence in classical Greek the word usually means "electing by vote". But it can also mean "holding out" or "laying on hands" over the head of another, and this is what it must mean here, since only Paul and Barnabas and not the whole assembly are said to do it. SS. Chrysostom and Jerome interpret it, "imposing hands" for ordination. The Greek term for ordinations is *χειροτονία*. It has been the immemorial custom of the Church to administer the Sacrament of Orders by imposition of hands.

Priests (*πρεσβύτεροι*). This word no doubt signifies literally "elders," or "old men". Still the persons here referred to were not necessarily old men, but the rulers set over the Church. Hence the word should be translated "priests" as in the Catholic version. These "priests," however, were evidently some of them bishops. The name "priest" was in those early days applied to both bishops and priests, that is, to both the highest and second order of Christian ministers. Our name "priest" is derived from "presbyter".

And had prayed with fasting. This circumstance, to which such attention was drawn (cap. xiii.) during St. Paul's ordination, is again referred to. Hence it is the rule of the Church to hold ordinations on the Saturdays of Ember weeks.

24. Spoken in Perge. It would appear as if this were for the first time. Then, leaving the hilly districts, the Apostle went down to the port of Attalia, where he would probably find a ship to take the party to Antioch. Attalia, one of the chief seaports of Pamphylia, is

25. And thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been delivered to the grace of God, unto the work which they accomplished.

26. And when they were arrived, and had assembled the church, they related what great things God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the gentiles.

27. And they stayed no little time with the disciples.

supposed to be named after its founder, King Attalus. It stands on a fine bay, and is very convenient for trade. Even to this day the Turks keep the harbour in good repair. It is now called *Sandalia*.

25. **Whence they had been delivered to the grace of God.** They returned to Antioch, from which town they had been commended by the elders (cap. xii. 3) to the grace of God, to help and bless their first missionary journey. This great work they had carried out. Some writers think the Apostles spent three years over this missionary journey. They left Antioch A.D. 46, and returned there A.D. 49.

26. **Open the door of faith.** In the classics, to "open the door" meant to give opportunities. But the phrase means more here—not only that the Gentiles were invited to the faith, but that many embraced it and entered the door of the Church. Some writers think the Apostles stayed nearly two years at Antioch—that is, until the first Council of Jerusalem, which is supposed to have occurred in A.D. 51.

ANALYSIS OF THE DISCOURSE TO THE LYSTRANS.

1st Point.—He exhorts them to abandon the service of idols, "to turn from these vain things to the living and true God" (v. 14). Compare his words in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, where he rejoices "that they were converted from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. i. 9).

2nd Point.—God may have appeared in the past to have no care for man and to withhold His favour (v. 15). Compare the same idea in the speech to the Athenians: "God having overlooked the times of this ignorance" (xvii. 30).

3rd Point.—But this is not true. From Nature, from all Creation, man could learn the existence of God (v. 16). Compare the same thought in his speech to the Athenians: "It is He who giveth life and breath and all things".

QUESTIONS.

1. What converts did St. Paul make at Iconium and Lystra?
2. Give in full the measures taken by the Jews against St. Paul at Iconium and Lystra. How do you account for their bitterness?

3. How did the Jews express their horror of blasphemy? Give some examples from the Acts.

4. State fully the circumstances attending the sacrifice to the Apostles by the Lystrans. What deities in their opinion had come down amongst them?

5. Give an account of the First Missionary Journey of the Apostles, with probable dates.

Explain with reference to the context :—

(a) Acting confidently in the Lord.

(b) We also are mortals.

(c) Suffered all nations to walk in their way.

(d) When they had ordained for them priests in every Church.

(e) Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God

CHAPTER XV.

A DISSENSION ABOUT CIRCUMCISION—vv. 1-6.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. AND some, coming down from Judea, taught the brethren : That unless you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.</p> <p>2. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small con-</p> | <p>test with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of the other side, should go up to the apostles and priests¹ to Jerusalem about this question.</p> |
|---|---|

The appeal to the Apostles—vv. 3-6.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>3. They therefore being brought on their way by the church, passed through Phenice² and Samaria, relating the conversion of the</p> | <p>gentiles : and they caused great joy to all the brethren.</p> <p>4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church, and</p> |
|---|--|

A. V.

¹ Apostles and elders.

² Phœnicia.

-
1. **And some coming down from Judea.** Some of the Jewish converts maintained that the Messias was promised and sent to the Jews only, and that the Gentiles could hope to share the grace of Jesus only if they observed all the laws of Moses.
 2. **Had no small contest.** Lit., no small discord and contest with Saul and Barnabas having arisen.
Others of the other side, i.e., of the Jewish side.
 3. **Phenice (Phœnicia) and Samaria.** Their road would lead by the sea coast, through Tyre and Sidon, to Jerusalem. It was a twelve days' journey by the well-laid Roman road. But the number of the brethren was multiplying fast. Both in Phœnicia and Samaria the Apostles must have spent some days exhorting and encouraging the disciples.
 4. **They were received by the Church.** The Greek reads : "They were received by the Church both of the Apostles and

by the apostles and **ancients**,¹ declaring how great things God had done with them.

5. But there rose up some of the sect of the Pharisees that believed, saying: They

must be circumcised, and be commanded to observe the law of Moses.

6. And the apostles and ancients came together to consider of this matter.

The decision of St. Peter—vv. 7-12.

7. And when there was much disputing, Peter, rising up, said to them: Men, brethren, you know that in **former days**² God made choice among us, that the gentiles by my mouth should hear

the word of the gospel, and believe.

8. And God, who knoweth the hearts, gave them testimony, giving to them the Holy Ghost as well as to us;

A. V.

¹ Apostles and elders.

² A good while ago.

the ancients". To them first St. Paul detailed his labours. Later on (v. 12), "the multitude," the body of the faithful, are addressed on the same topic. *Ancients*, the same word as in v. 2, better translated "priests".

5. **The Pharisees.** The name is derived from a word that means "separated". They kept themselves separate from persons of laxer observance. The charges against them were that they were eaten up with pride, and despised the poor and lowly. They had great respect for the law of Moses, but to this they added many traditions and precepts of their own which they considered as sacred as the law. They were the national party and were bitterly opposed to the rule of the Romans.

They must be circumcised. It was for the compulsory circumcision of the Gentiles that the Jewish party chiefly struggled.

6. This is considered the First Council of the Church.

7. **Peter rising up**, as chief of the Apostles and primate of the Church. Having heard both sides dispute, he rises to decide the point of doctrine, that is, whether the Gentiles are to be admitted into the Church equally with the Jews without being commanded to observe the law of Moses. "As the one entrusted by Christ with the flock, as first of the band, he (Peter) always first begins the speaking" (Chrysost. on Acts i. 15).
-

9. And made no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10. Now, therefore, why tempt you God, to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11. But by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we believe to be saved, even as they.

12. And all the multitude held their peace, and gave ear to Barnabas and Paul relating what great signs and wonders God had wrought among the gentiles by them.

In former days. He alludes to the conversion of Cornelius, about fourteen years previously (Acts x.).

Amongst us. Peter was chosen from amongst the Apostles to admit Gentiles into the Church (*ibid.*).

Purifying their hearts by faith. It was God Himself that gave testimony that their hearts were purified from sin; and this not by any observance of the law of Moses, as they were Gentiles, but by their faith in Jesus whom Peter had preached.

10. **Tempt God.** To tempt God is to resist His known will, and court His anger. Why should they disbelieve in the power of God to save men by faith rather than by the law?

Nor we were able to bear, i.e., scarcely able to bear. We must distinguish the two parts of the law—(a) the Ten Commandments or the Natural Law. These Christ did not come to abolish but to strengthen. (b) The ceremonial and legal regulations, which were very minute, and were found to be a very heavy burthen. These Christ came to abolish; not because they were not very good and prudent in themselves, but because the Jews thought they were as important, and even more important, than the Divine law of the Decalogue. (See Matt. xxiii.) It was time to overturn the whole of the ceremonial law when the Jewish Church had fallen into such a heresy on the point.

11. **We believe to be saved even as they.** We believe that we shall be saved in the same way as they, our fathers, were, *i.e.,* by grace through faith. St. Peter would probably explain fully that it was by faith that the holy ones of the Old Law obtained salvation. If *they* were saved by faith, why may not the Gentiles also be saved by faith?

12. **Held their peace.** The authority of St. Peter, as St. Chrysostom here notices, obtained a quiet hearing for Paul and Barnabas, which previously (v. 7) had been denied them. They then recounted how God had blessed their first mission among the Gentiles.

The discourse of St. James—vv. 13-21.

13. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying: Men, brethren, hear me.
14. Simon¹ hath told in what manner God first visited the gentiles, to take out of them a people to his name.

A. V.

¹ Simeon.

SUMMARY OF ST. PETER'S SPEECH.

1st Point.—God called Cornelius, a Gentile, into the Church, and bestowed upon him all the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

2nd Point.—We shall be tempting God's anger unless we bear this in mind and abstain from placing burthens on the Gentile converts, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear.

3rd Point.—Our fathers were saved by faith and not by observance of the law. Therefore the Gentiles by the same faith can enter eternal life.

13. James answered. He was Bishop of Jerusalem at the time.

This was James surnamed the Less, to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, who was called the Greater. He was the Son of Cleophas, otherwise termed Alpheus, and Mary, who was cousin to our Blessed Lady. Hence St. James was termed the brother of the Lord, according to a custom of the Jews, who included cousins under the term brothers and sisters. St. James lived a most austere life, and was held in such admiration by the Jews that he was allowed, though a follower of Christ, to enter the Holy of Holies. In spite of this reverence, the Jews laid violent hands upon him for his preaching of Jesus. He was hurled from a tower on to the pavement below, and as he was praying for his enemies, a blow from a fuller's staff completed his martyrdom.

Some writers think that because St. James spoke last he must have been the President of this Council. But this, as St. Chrysostom has told us, is a mistake. St. Peter decided the point of doctrine. St. James now comes forward, as one in whom the Jewish Christians placed much confidence, to propose a practical arrangement by which Jewish and Gentile converts could more easily live together.

14. How God first visited (ἐπεσκέψατο). This word also means "to look upon with favour or mercy". God looked favourably upon the Gentiles, to take from them a people to his name.

For His name. For the praise and glory of His name.

15. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written :

16. After these things I will return, and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will rebuild the ruins thereof, and I will set it up :

17. That the rest of men¹ may seek after the Lord, and all² nations upon whom my name is invoked, saith the

Lord who doeth these things.

18. To the Lord is known his own work from the beginning of the world.

19. Wherefore I judge that they,³ who from among the gentiles are converted to God, are not to be disquieted.⁴

20. But that we write to them, that they refrain themselves from the pollutions of

A. V.

¹ The residue of men.

² All the gentiles.

³ My sentence is.

⁴ We trouble not them.

Prophet Amos, cap. ix. 11, 12. St. James is quoting from the Greek, which is a little different from our version, the latter being from the Hebrew. The tabernacle of David is the Church, in which God gathered David and all His servants of the Old Law. But this Church fell to ruins, not only on account of their heresy in regarding the ceremonial law as binding as the Divine law, but also because they refused to believe the teachings of Christ. God has rebuilt His Church upon Christ and His Apostles, that they may acquire and lead into the fold all nations.

18. From the beginning of the world. God from all eternity predestined this great work, the Incarnation of Christ. It is madness, O Israelites, to attempt to oppose the mighty and all-seeing will of God.

19. I judge (*κρίνω*). He gives in his adhesion to St. Peter and against the "believing Pharisees". It is interesting to note that this word *κρίνω* is the word often used by Greek Bishops when giving their votes in Councils of the Church.

20. Pollutions of idols, *i.e.*, meats offered to idols. They are termed, in v. 29, *idolothyta*. In pagan temples the flesh of the victims offered in sacrifice was afterwards distributed and partaken of by those who were present. These meats were sometimes given as relief to the poor. By the Jews these meats were held in abomination, and it would have been very difficult at this time to

idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

21. For Moses from ancient times hath in every city them that preach him in the synagogues, where he is read every sabbath.

The decree of the Council of Jerusalem—vv. 22-29.

22. Then it pleased the apostles and ancients, with the whole church, to choose men of their own company, and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas:

bring Jewish converts to associate with Gentile converts who were known to eat of "pollutions of idols". Moreover the Gentile converts themselves ran great risk of their faith, by mixing themselves up with pagan rites. The Apostles, therefore, wisely forbade eating of *idolothyta*.

From fornication. It is not unlikely that this refers to marriages between pagans and believers, marriages most repugnant to the Jews.

Things strangled and from blood. From the earliest times God had forbidden all mingling of blood with food. Immediately after the Deluge He gave this command to Noe, "Flesh with blood you shall not eat" (Gen. ix. 4). Strangled meats were objected to because they retain so much of the blood.

21. **Moses from ancient times.** Better, the law of Moses (forbidding these things) for generations past has been preached in every city. We must then add something like the following to make the Apostle's argument complete: "What hope of peace would there be between the Christians, if the Gentile converts openly disregarded some of the most cherished practices of the Jews?"

SUMMARY OF ST. JAMES'S SPEECH.

1st Point.—He supports St. Peter's account of the wonderful call of Cornelius the Gentile.

2nd Point.—He proves from the authority of the Prophet Amos that the Church of the Jews was to fall away and that another Church (that of Christ) would arise on its ruins and receive Jews and Gentiles alike.

3rd Point.—For the sake of peace he advises the Gentiles to observe a few matters of the law which were especially cherished by the Jews.

22. **Silas**, in Latin *Silvanus*, afterwards the constant companion of St. Paul.

23. **By their hands.** *I.e.*, what the Apostles had written was conveyed by the hands of their deputies.

Judas who was surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren,

23. Writing¹ by their hands: The apostles and ancients, brethren, to the brethren of the gentiles that are at Antioch and in Syria and Cilicia, greeting:

24. Forasmuch as we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words,² subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commands:

25. It hath seemed good to us, assembled³ together, to choose out men, and send them to you with our dearly beloved Barnabas and Paul;

26. Men who have given their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27. We have sent, therefore, Judas and Silas, who themselves also will by word of mouth tell you the same things.

28. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things:

29. That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which things keeping yourselves, you shall do well. Fare ye well.

A. V.

¹ And they wrote letters by them after this manner.

² Add, that ye must be circumcised and keep the law.

³ Being assembled of one accord.

The Apostles and elders or "priests," *brethren*. Some put "and" before brethren, but this is not according to the ancient MSS. *Antioch, Syria and Cilicia*. This would seem to indicate that the letter was addressed to the brethren in these parts alone. Certainly St. Paul in his Epistle makes no mention of these prohibitions, and allows his converts to eat *idolothya*, if it can be done without scandal to others (1 Cor. viii. 4-8).

24. Subverting your souls, *i.e.*, "unsettling your minds".

25. Being assembled together (*γενομένοις ὁμοθυμαδόν*), having become of one accord—being of one mind on this question.

26. The Apostles wished by these words to show their high appreciation of Paul and Barnabas.

For the name. In Hebrew the name represents the person.

28. Seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us. This is a hendiadys for, "it hath seemed good to us inspired by the Holy Ghost". Hence General Councils are directed by

The reception of the decree at Antioch—vv. 30-35.

30. They therefore, being dismissed, went down to Antioch; and when they had gathered together the multitude, they delivered the epistle:

31. Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32. But Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, comforted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

33. And having stayed there some time, they were dismissed with peace by the brethren to those who had sent them.

34. But it seemed good to Silas to remain there; and Judas alone went back to Jerusalem.

35. But Paul and Barnabas continued at Antioch, teaching and preaching with many others the word of the Lord.

St. Paul separates from Barnabas—vv. 36-41.

36. And after some days, Paul said to Barnabas: Let us return and visit the brethren in all the cities, wherein we have preached the word of the Lord, to see how they do.

37. And Barnabas had a mind to take¹ along with him John also, who was surnamed Mark.

38. But Paul² desired that he (as having departed from them out of Pamphylia, and

A. V.

¹ Barnabas determined to take.

² Paul thought not good to take.

the Holy Spirit, so that they cannot err in their decrees.

No further burthen. That is, from the law of Moses. Of course the Decalogue, being the natural law, would be binding always.

31. For the consolation, which the letter brought to their doubts and perplexities.

32. Being prophets. "Their qualifications for addressing the congregation are carefully stated. St. Luke lays such evident stress on proper qualifications, that he seems to have considered Divine gifts necessary in any one that was to address a congregation."—Ramsay.

33. (ποιήσαντες χρόνον.) Literally, "making time," the Greek idiom for "staying for a time".

34. This verse is omitted in many MSS.

not gone with them to the work) might not be received.

39. And there was a dissension,¹ so that they departed one from another: and Barnabas indeed, having taken with him Mark, sailed to Cyprus;

40. But Paul, choosing

Silas, departed, being delivered² by the brethren to the grace of God.

41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches; commanding them to keep the precepts of the apostles and the ancients.³

A. V.

¹ And the dissension was so sharp.

² Recommended by the brethren.

³ "Ancients" omitted.

38. Paul desired (ἡξίλου). "Thought it right," as he had deserted them in Pamphylia, not to take him again.

39. A dissension (παροξυσμός), "a sharp dispute". It lasted only for a short time. The humility of the Apostle is shown in allowing this episode to be related. The harder share of work certainly fell to Paul. For Cyprus, with a Christian as proconsul, would not be so difficult a field of labour. Barnabas is supposed to have been a Bishop of Cyprus, and to have died there. St. Jerome says that his body was discovered in the island during the reign of the Emperor Zeno—and that a volume of the Gospel of St. Matthew in the handwriting of Barnabas was found on his breast. The sacred writer henceforth follows the fortunes of St. Paul, who here commences his Second Missionary Journey.

QUESTIONS.

1. State fully the differences that arose between the Jewish and Gentile converts in the early Church.

2. Who were the Pharisees, Silas, James, Cornelius?

3. How is the Primacy of St. Peter indicated in this chapter?

4. Give a summary of St. Peter's speech.

5. Give a summary of St. James's speech.

6. What is meant by "pollutions of idols"?

7. How can you reconcile the words of Christ (Matt. v. 17), "I am not come to destroy the law but to fulfil," with the words of St. Peter, "the yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear"?

8. "Moses from ancient times hath in every city," etc. What must be supplied to complete the Apostle's argument?

9. Give a full account of the dissension between St. Paul and Barnabas.

10. Recite the letter sent out by the Apostles.

11. Explain with reference to context :—

- (a) Why tempt you God?
- (b) Purifying their hearts by faith.
- (c) We believe to be saved even as they.
- (d) That they refrain themselves from fornication, things strangled and from blood.
- (e) Subverting your souls.
- (f) Being assembled together.

CHAPTER XVI

PAUL TAKES TIMOTHY WITH HIM AND VISITS CHURCHES OF PHRYGIA AND GALATIA.

1. AND he came to Derbe and Lystra. And, behold, there was a certain disciple there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who believed, his father being a gentile.¹

2. To this man the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium gave a good testimony.

3. Him Paul would have to go along with him; and taking him, he circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in those places:

for they all knew that his father was a gentile.

4. And as they passed through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees for to keep, that were decreed by the apostles and ancients who were at Jerusalem.

5. The churches indeed were confirmed in faith, and increased in number daily.

6. Now having passed through Phrygia, and the country of Galatia,² they were forbidden by the Holy

A. V.

¹ Being a Greek.

² The region of Galatia.

-
1. Timothy, son of a Jewish woman. Her name was Eunice, which means "Victory".
 2. St. Timothy was probably converted on St. Paul's first visit. He became afterwards one of the most devoted disciples of the Apostle. He followed him in Greece, Jerusalem, and Rome. Tradition tells us that he was ordained Bishop of Ephesus, and received the crown of martyrdom in that city, A.D. 91. St. Paul wrote to him two Epistles, which form part of the New Testament.
 3. Although the Apostle taught that circumcision was no longer necessary (1 Cor. vii. 19), he was so anxious not to put obstacles in the way of preaching the Gospel, that for the sake of peace, to avoid giving offence to the Jews, he circumcised Timothy, whom his heathen father had left uncircumcised.

Ghost to preach the word of God in Asia. and the Spirit of Jesus permitted them not.

7. And when they were come into Mysia,¹ they attempted to go into Bithynia: 8. And when they had passed through Mysia, they went down to Troas.

They cross over to Macedonia—vv. 9-12.

9. And a vision was shown to Paul in the night: A man of Macedonia standing, and beseeching him, and saying: Pass over into Macedonia, and help us. 10. And as soon as he had seen the vision, im-

A. V.

¹ They assayed to go.

6. **Forbidden by the Holy Ghost.** Perhaps the Asiatics were not disposed and prepared to receive the Gospel, while the Macedonians were more ripe for it.

In Asia. The country round about Ephesus was more generally termed Asia.

Galatia is so called from its Gaulish inhabitants. It is believed that at the time of the invasion of Rome by the Gauls, another body of the same nation set out for Asia Minor and settled in the district afterwards known as Galatia.

This account of the route of the Apostle is not easy to understand. Professor Ramsay suggests that by Galatia, St. Luke means not Galatia Proper but the district in which Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch were. This district was called by the Roman officials of those days Southern Galatia; and the western portion of it was termed Phrygia. (See the Appendix for a fuller account of this journey.)

7. **The Spirit of Jesus.** That is, the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

8. **Troas.** The well-known seaport, about four miles from Old Troy.

9. **A man of Macedonia.** There are some reasons for thinking that this was no other than St. Luke himself.

10. **We sought to go.** The change to the first person plural now shows that Luke joined Paul, Silas, and Timothy. When the Apostle leaves Philippi (v. 19) the first person is dropped, and we conclude that St. Luke was left behind at Philippi.

Macedonia. Now part of Turkey in Europe, and still termed Macedonia. The little kingdom became famous by the

mediately we sought to go into Macedonia, being assured¹ that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11. So, sailing from Troas,² we came with a direct course to Samothracia, and the day following to Neapolis;

12. And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of part of Macedonia, a colony: and we were in this city some days conferring together.³

They preach in Philippi—vv. 13-15.

13. And upon the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where it seemed that there was prayer;⁴ and, sitting down, we spoke to the women that were assembled.

14. And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped

A. V.

¹ Assuredly gathering.

² Loosing from Troas.

³ Abiding certain days.

⁴ Where prayer was wont to be made.

victories of its King, Alexander the Great. Perseus, its king in B.C. 180, having quarrelled with the Romans, was defeated in battle, and his kingdom became the Roman province of Macedonia.

12. A colony, i.e., of the Romans. It was a practice of the later days of the Roman republic to send out a number of citizens, old soldiers, etc., to found or take possession of a town, where they lived by Roman laws and customs. These colonies not only relieved the Mother Country of an overflowing population, but were, at the same time, posts of defence against enemies.

The chief town. Amphipolis was really the capital of the district, but Philippi claimed that it was "chief" in importance.

Conferring together (*διατρίβοντες*), "remaining," "tarrying for a few days".

13. That there was prayer. Perhaps not a Synagogue but a Proseuché, a small oratory. These were often mere enclosures, generally situated on the banks of rivers, so that the Jews could carry out their different purifications.

14. Thyatira. A city of Lydia in Asia Minor, celebrated for the manufacture of dyes.

Worshipped God (*σεβόμενη*). A proselyte.

God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul.

15. And when she was baptised, and her household,

she besought us, saying: If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and there remain. And she constrained us.

Paul is summoned before the magistrates—vv. 16-22.

16. And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain girl, possessed with a pythonical spirit,¹ met us, who brought her masters much gain by divining.²

17. This same, following Paul and us, cried out, saying: These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show you the way to salvation.

18. And this she did many days. But Paul be-

ing grieved, turned and said to the spirit: I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ,³ to go out of her. And he went out the same hour.

19. But her masters seeing that the hope of their gain was gone, having apprehended Paul and Silas, they brought them into the market-place to the rulers;

20. And presenting them to the magistrates, said:

A. V.

¹ A damsel possessed with a spirit of divination. ² By soothsaying.

16. **To prayer** (*προσευχήν*). To the place of prayer.

A pythonical spirit. Python was a fabled serpent at Delphi killed by Apollo, who was thereupon surnamed *Pythian*. As Apollo was supposed to deliver the famous oracles at Delphi, these oracles were termed *Pythian*, or *Pythonical*. Afterwards any evil spirit that pretended to tell the future was called a *Pythian*, or *divining spirit*. Such a demon had entered into the girl of the text. A modern attempt to explain this as "ventriloquism" is totally opposed to the narrative.

17. **These are servants of God.** It may be that the demon was compelled by God to speak thus. St. Chrysostom thinks the devil was trying to tempt St. Paul to vainglory and thus ruin the fruit of his labours.

18. **Grieved** (*διαπονηθείς*). Gr., "wearied out".

19. **Rulers** (*ἄρχοντες*). City judges.

20. **Magistrates.** A colony was governed by two officers called *aumviri*, but they were more usually styled by the Roman name *prætors* (*στρατηγοί*), here used.

These men disturb our city,
being Jews;

21. And preach a fashion¹
which it is not lawful for us
to receive nor observe, being
Romans.

22. And the people ran
together against them; and
their garments being torn
off,² the magistrates com-
manded them to be beaten
with rods.

*The imprisonment of Paul and Silas, and the conversion
of the jailor—vv. 23-34.*

23. And when they had
laid many stripes upon
them, they cast them into
prison, charging the jailor
to keep them securely:

24. Who, having received
such a charge, thrust them
into the inner prison, and
made their feet fast in the
stocks.

25. And at midnight Paul
and Silas, praying, praised
God, and they who were in
prison heard them.

26. And suddenly there
was a great earthquake, so
that the foundations of the
prison were shaken: and
immediately after the doors
were opened: and every
one's bands were loosed.

27. And the keeper of
the prison being awakened,
and seeing the doors of the
prison open, having drawn
his sword, would have killed
himself, imagining that the
prisoners had fled.

A. V.

¹ And teach customs.

² People rose up together against them, and the magistrates rent
off their clothes.

Being Jews. They appeal to the hatred of the Romans
against the Jews, as they had no just ground of com-
plaint. It was contrary to the laws of Rome to introduce
new religions.

22. *Their garments being torn off.* Gr., "The prætors having
torn off their garments ordered them," etc. The general
formula in these cases was: "Go, lictors, strip off their
garments, let them be scourged".

25. *At midnight.* It is not unlikely that, as in many instances
of the martyrs, their wounds were miraculously healed;
and they broke out in thanksgiving to God.

The other prisoners "were listening" (ἐπηκροῶντο).

27. A Roman jailor was answerable with his life for his
prisoners.

28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying: Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.

29. Then calling for a light he went in,¹ and trembling, fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas;

30. And bringing them out he said: Masters,² what must I do that I may be saved?

31. And they said: Believe in the Lord Jesus,³ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house.

33. And he, taking them the same hour of the night, washed their wounds; and he was baptised, and presently all his family.⁴

34. And when he had brought them into his own house, he laid the table for them,⁵ and rejoiced with all his family, believing God.

The magistrates come and apologise to Paul—vv. 35-40.

35. And when it was day the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying: Dismiss those men.

36. And the keeper of the prison told these words to Paul: The magistrates have

sent that you should be dismissed: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37. But Paul said to them: After having whipped us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, they sent

A. V.

¹ And sprang in.

² Sirs.

³ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ He and his straightway.

⁵ He set meat before them.

29. Went in (εἰσέπηδησε). Sprang in.

31. Believe in the Lord Jesus. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ was to accept all His teaching. It means, in short, from a Pagan to become a Christian. See also Acts xiii. 39.

35. The earthquake had frightened the prætors also, and they sent the lictors to the prison.

37. Romans. The Roman law forbade the scourging of any one who had the privilege of a Roman citizen. The prætors had done a most illegal thing, not only by scourging a Roman citizen publicly, but, worse still, "uncondemned," without giving him an opportunity for defence.

us to prison; and now do they thrust us out privately? Not so; but let them come,

38. And they themselves send us out. And the serjeants told these words to the magistrates. And they were afraid, having heard they were Romans:

39. And coming, they

entreated them; and leading them out, they desired them to depart out of the city.

40. And coming out of the prison, they entered into *the house* of Lydia: and having seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

The people of Tarsus had taken part with J. Cæsar and had suffered much from Cassius. M. Antony therefore gave them the freedom of the city of Rome, and Augustus still further extended their privileges. St. Paul was therefore by birth a Roman citizen, as he told the Tribune Lysias. Cap. xxi. 32. St. Paul exacted this apology from the magistrates, because he thus obtained greater liberty for his preaching.

38. **The serjeants.** That is, the lictors, who had scourged the Apostles on the previous day. The lictors attended on the magistrates to execute their orders. As a symbol of their office, they carried on their shoulders the *fascæ*, a bundle of rods with an axe in the middle.

40. **Having seen the brethren.** To the Philippians he afterwards wrote one of his Epistles, from which we learn how generous they were to him, and how devoted he was to them in return and how edified by their faith.

QUESTIONS.

1. Give an account of St. Timothy.
2. Explain the terms, "colony," "Pythonical spirit," "lictors," "Roman citizen."
3. Give the different towns and countries through which the Apostle passed on his Second Missionary Journey.
4. Give the positions of Phrygia, Galatia, Asia, Mysia, Bithynia, Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi, Thyatira, Macedonia.
5. Give a full account of—
 - (a) The conversion of Lydia.
 - (b) The exorcism of the Pythonical spirit.
 - (c) The scourging and imprisonment of the Apostle.
 - (d) The earthquake and release of the Apostles.
6. Explain "Believe in the Lord Jesus," and give two examples to show that those who believed were required to be baptised.
7. Explain with reference to the context:—
 - (a) They were forbidden by the Holy Ghost.
 - (b) These are the servants of God.
 - (c) Where it seemed that there was prayer.

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